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THE INSIDE STORY



Reagan's war on the impoverished

By Alexander Cockburn & James Ridgeway

NEW YORK

While all eyes focused on Alexander Haig and his particular version of war and peace, a rather more practical onslaught was being planned by his Republican colleagues. The victims are not in some distant territory, but conveniently within the borders of the United States, most notably within New York state, where 1.8 million people will be affected by an immediate, extraordinarily punitive reduction in the food stamp program.

Food stamps are one of the largest social welfare programs in the nation, reaching 22 million people. In the words of a U.S. Department of Agriculture official who has monitored the proposals coming in from the Reagan team, the reductions in the food stamp program could range anywhere from the drastic to the "gargantuan." The new president's advisors have been discussing a sharp cut that would reduce the program from 22 million to 15 million and in the process change the rules for applying.

Almost since the day he presented himself as a candidate more than a year ago, Ronald Reagan has had to confront the question: How could he offer a tax cut, boost defense spending and balance the budget all at the same time? The obvious answer was that Reagan would take an axe to social expenditures. But even here his campaign rhetoric, with the Rooseveltian appeal to every class, seemed to militate against a straightforward onslaught on widows and orphans.

We are now about to witness one of the swiftest double crosses in the history of campaign pledges: an onslaught on the living standards not only of the most defenseless and abject victims of the American economy but also of the temporarily unemployed to whom Reagan was holding forth the promises of growth and better times.

The Reaganite attack is of the most instinctive type. Since the time it was set up, conservative politicians have belabored the food stamp program as a particularly affronting example of profligate big government in action. Of course, few politicians were intemperate enough to say they wished to destroy the program outright. It was the usual talk of separating the fat from the bone.

At any one time today about 22 million people, some 10 percent of the population, are receiving food stamps. To qualify for the program it is necessary to show an individual income less than \$3,800 a year; for a family of four, an income below \$7,450. That being the case, you get some \$1.25 worth of food stamps per person a day.

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Thus, a woman with two children would receive \$3.75, scarcely the current cost of a modest lunch for one in a coffee shop. The program, even Republicans admit, is efficiently run, with only 5 percent of \$9.7 billion being allocated for overhead. It must be renewed this year.

While details of the proposed cuts are not known for certain, the point men for the attack have taken their places. They are:

- Jesse Helms, chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee and congressional leader of the New Right. Helms alleges the food stamp program is "infested" with "parasites" who must be cut off.

"No worker who walks off his job, who goes on strike, ought to be eligible for food stamps," says Helms. "No college student who comes from an affluent family ought to be drawing food stamps, nor should illegal aliens." Helms believes the food stamp operation can be cut anywhere from 5 to 40 percent.

(Incidentally, the allusion to affluent college students drawing stamps is an oft-repeated charge. In fact, students have all but been removed from the program, and their numbers now account for two-tenths of 1 percent.)

- David Stockman, Reagan's choice to head the Office of Management and Budget. Like the rest of the tax-cutting Reagan ideologues, Stockman has always been careful to insist that his free-market vision does not involve increased suffering by the underclass. His criticisms of the food stamp program are couched in comfortable preachments: Snipping away a bit of waste here and there to make things more efficient.

But Stockman's specific recommendation last year made even Helms squirm with envy. The then-Michigan congressman proposed saving \$1.18 billion by eliminating what he referred to as food stamp "duplication." The object of Stockman's ire were the children of the destitute who, in addition to their \$1.25 a day, were feasting on a fourth "free meal" provided them through the federal school lunch program, a princely banquet in the form of what most people would regard as a derisory snack.

- John R. Block, the Illinois director of Agriculture who is to be the next Secretary of Agriculture. Block is the Galesburg pig farmer who distinguished himself in his first press conference by announcing that U.S. foreign food aid programs were a weapon that should be used fiercely to weld recalcitrant nations of the Third World to the American way. He had to hastily correct this harsh rendition of the facts and substitute the words "instrument of peace" for the unseemly "weapon." As soon as he was nominated, Block rushed to visit Helms, whereupon he predicted the food stamp program could be cut from 5 to 40 percent. He has since retreated from these figures behind bland generalizations.

- Richard S. Schweiker, the new Secretary of Health and Human Services. From his early, tempestuous days as a friend of labor Schweiker has been regarded by Republican purists as something of a bleeding heart, too stupid to know what to do with that tender instrument and thereby tolerated as a mere inconvenience.

Schweiker could end up being the most mischievous of food stamp foes, for he, mimicking Reagan himself, wants to repackage social welfare programs, including food stamps, as block grants to the states. That would remove the federal government from surveillance, place an effective ceiling on the money, and allow for a myriad of local standards. The refusal of localities, particularly in the South, to provide the poor with adequate supplies of food was what brought forth the expansion of the food stamp program in the late 1960s, and nobody wants to return to those days.

- Martin Anderson, domestic policy advisor to Reagan and chief theorist of the onslaught. What makes Anderson chafe (apart from theoretical objections to any form of government intervention into the operations of humanity, rich or poor) is the thought that food stamp recipients are on the receiving end of prodigious largesse from the government, that the old-age pensioner, in addition to his \$1.25 a day, is probably getting medical care at subsidized rates, housing below true market rates, and subsidized energy, as well. Anderson's argument is that if the dwelling of an old-age pensioner were to be valued at realistic rates and a similar, more realistic value put on subsidized energy and medicine, it would turn out that the recipient was wealthy—in theory, if not in practice—and thus in no way deserving of a free ride to the local Safeway.

Bracing for the fray.

This group is now readying itself for battle in the new Congress, pondering the best ways to cut back. An attack on school-lunch duplication seems probable. A requirement making recipients wait 90 days before receiving their stamps, and averaging their income over that period, is another distinct possibility.

But the onslaught has more opponents than might at first be supposed:

- With George McGovern gone, the chief congressional defender is Brooklyn representative Fred Richmond, who heads the House Agriculture subcommittee in charge of food stamps. Another New York state congressman, Matthew McHugh of Ithaca, is reckoned as a major defender of the program on the House Appropriations Committee.

- Recipients and activists gathered around the Food Research and Action Center, a non-profit advocacy center that works with the poor to end hunger and malnutrition; a new National Anti-Hunger Coalition, of which FRAC is a part; various labor unions led by the United Food and Commercial Workers, UAW and AF-SCME; the American Public Welfare Association; and church groups.

- The supermarkets, organized through the Food Marketing Institute. Chain stores not only back the food stamp program but officially support an increase of funding through institution of inflation escalators to guard recipients against rising costs of food.

An estimated 5 percent of chain store gross revenues come from food stamps, and with supermarkets running narrow profit margins, that's a considerable amount of money. The positions of people like Helms and Block stun chain store executives. After watching Block's opening press conference, a top executive of a leading chain predicted that if the program were substantially cut, every one of his store's front windows would be broken.

- Eccentric Republicans in Congress. These are people who don't like government programs but are pragmatic politicians and recoil in disgust at Helms and the New Right purists. Bob Dole is the best example. He supports food stamps, and although most of his time will be taken up as the new chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, Dole may also end up as chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee subcommittee handling the food stamp program. Dole will almost surely be a voice of moderation, joined perhaps by Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker, who has never attacked the program head-on.

- Republican governors in states such as Michigan and Ohio are also potential allies. Many states have statutory ceilings on welfare programs. As payments

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IN THESE TIMES



There is little to cheer about

By Fred Halliday

LONDON

THE END OF THE 14-MONTH conflict between Iran and the U.S. may bring relief to the hostages and their families and enable Iran to improve its international diplomatic position. Yet, as one chapter of this dispute ends, another may be about to start. Inside Iran, the forces competing for power will now rival each other in claiming credit for the end of the affair—for successfully confronting the U.S. and for bringing about a solution that will be seen as a victory for Iran.

Both factions also can be expected to compete for access to the material prize of the final settlement: some \$8 billion that Washington has handed over. Since the war with Iraq began on Sept. 22, Iran has had, in effect, two arms-purchasing policies—one carried out by the official army and its supporter Bani-Sadr, the other by the *Pasdaran*, or Islamic irregulars, backed by Premier Rajai and his clerical allies. Each group will now be keen to use the assets released by the U.S. to strengthen its hand. And one can expect perhaps even greater conflict between the two factions now that one major threat—that from the U.S.—has been removed by the hostage settlement.

One can expect, too, that the initial mood of patriotic relief in the U.S. will not last for long. The hostages themselves may be tempted to point out that the whole crisis could have been avoided in the first place if Washington had listened to the advice of its Tehran embassy staff and refused the Shah admission to a New York hospital in October 1979. If the hostages are grateful to Carter for securing their release, they may also blame him for his initial blunder.

The Iranian decision to press for a settlement of the hostage issue reflects a number of changes in the domestic balance of forces in that country. The war with Iraq has certainly contributed to this. It has highlighted just how diplomatically isolated Iran is—neither the UN, nor the Islamic League, nor the non-aligned countries have even formally condemned what is a clear act of aggression by Iraq. Iran also needs its U.S. funds to replace materiel lost on the battlefield if it is to sustain the long, drawn-out conflict with Iraq that now seems probable.

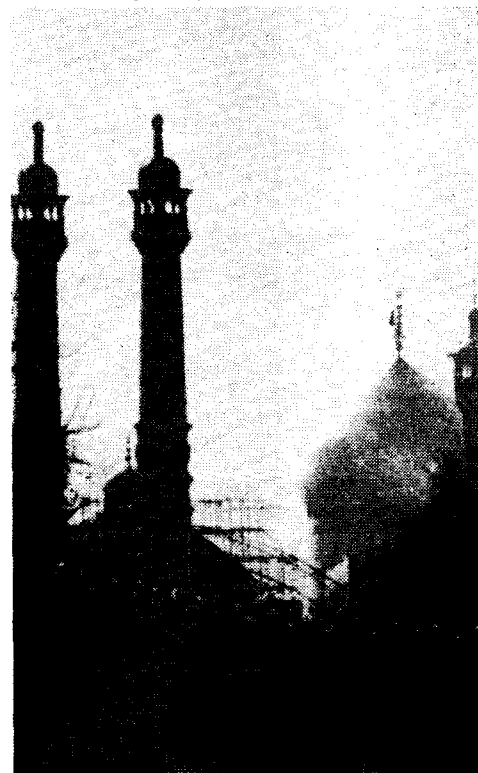
More than the problems of war.

But the war has not made the Iranians as immediately pliant as many in the West initially expected, and there was no direct connection between the outbreak of the war, with all its attendant problems, and Iran's new willingness to negotiate on the hostages.

The war broke out on Sept. 22. Yet it

was a speech by Khomeini earlier in September, followed by a confirming vote in the Iranian Parliament on the ayatollah's four conditions, that set the context for the present round of talks. And though some have suggested that the Russians tipped Tehran authorities off about a possible Iraqi attack, no linkage between the two issues can be shown. Moreover, the economic pressure on Iran caused by the war seems now to have been exaggerated; though the Abadan refinery was knocked out, Iran has been able to continue exporting oil in its crude form at a rate of about one billion barrels a day, bringing in revenues of around \$1 billion a month—just below the pre-war level.

A more decisive factor in altering Iran's stance has been the shift in domestic alignment. It was a conflict between the militant Islamic clerical faction and the more cautious "liberal" grouping that first prompted the seizure of the



hostages on Nov. 4, 1979. While there was widespread anger in Iran over the fact that the Shah had been admitted to New York—and little trust in the U.S. claim that the ex-monarch was in fact seriously ill—it was not anger alone that prompted the organized assault on the embassy and the well-mobilized mass demonstrations that followed. Rather, the clerical forces saw an opportunity to discredit the then-government of Mehdi Bazargan and to keep up the pressure on Bani-Sadr when he was elected president a few months later.

Most of the militants holding the hostages were from a group called the Organization of Muslim Strugglers led by the right-wing ideologue Dr. Peiman. Khomeini did not, on present evidence, authorize the seizure; but he had prepared the political climate in which it oc-

curred by a particularly strong denunciation of the U.S. two days before, and his son, Ahmed Khomeini, was implicated. Once the seizure occurred, the Imam saw fit to give it his blessing and to prevent any precipitous solution as long as there was not a consensus in Iran on how the matter should be resolved. What was at stake, however, was not primarily Iran's relations with the U.S. but rather the distribution of political power within the new Islamic republic.

The benefits at home.

For months on end the clerical forces refused to give ground on the hostage issue. They saw it as a way of heaping discredit on the "liberals" who could be accused of wanting to maintain links with the West. It mobilized great waves of enthusiasm across Iran, drawing on the history of deep resentment of U.S. support for the Shah. And it helped bring most of the left behind the clerical forces, thereby further isolating "liberal" remnants of the secular bloc.

Nor were the international repercussions such as to offset these domestic gains. Each U.S. move appeared to confirm the validity of the militants' position. The seizure of Iranian assets, the threats from Washington, and finally the failed Tabas raid in April 1980 all helped consolidate the position of the hostage-takers inside Iran and projected

employment, even the most steadfast Islamic militants could see that it was the time to seek a settlement. Reagan would be in the White House at the end of January, and then, as Iran was beginning the negotiating process, the war with Iraq broke out.

The bad outweighs the good.

It may be a long time before a thorough evaluation of the hostage conflict can be made, but certain pros and cons are already clear.

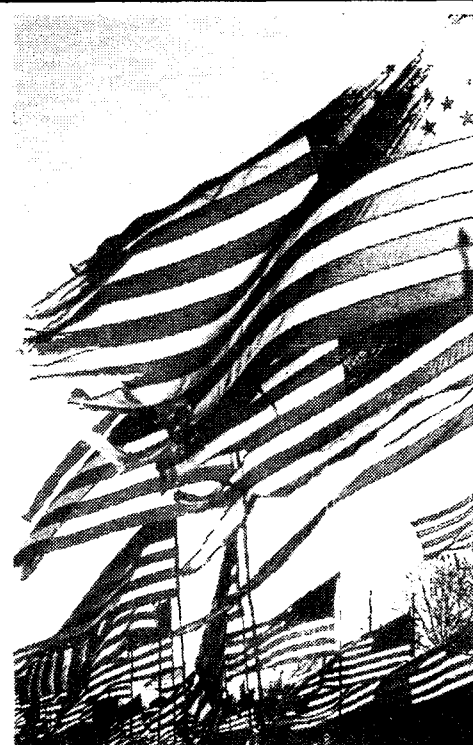
On Iran's side two points can be made. The first is that on any balance sheet of illegality and criminal behavior the verdict is still overwhelmingly in Iran's favor. The U.S. organized the coup that overthrew a democratically elected government in 1953 and for a quarter of a century colluded with the bloody dictatorship of the Shah. When Reagan talks about "barbarians" he is seeking to occlude this past U.S. criminality. Moreover, the Iranians have handed back their captives unharmed. Yet Reagan is apparently prepared to send arms to Islamic militants who, far from handing back their captives, boast that they kill their prisoners and mutilate them before doing so, tearing out their eyes and chopping off their tongues—to wit, the Afghan rebels. Reagan's use of the term "barbarians" is, to say the least, selective.

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From South Korea to El Salvador, those likely to suffer from a new U.S. aggressiveness have the Ayatollah Khomeini to thank.

Iran's image as a center of revolutionary militance around the world. The Soviet Union made only the most tepid of criticisms of the embassy action and the American reaction to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan blew away whatever reserve for the U.S. Moscow might have retained. The disarray of NATO countries in response to U.S. calls for a complete boycott of Iran was also welcome news in Tehran.

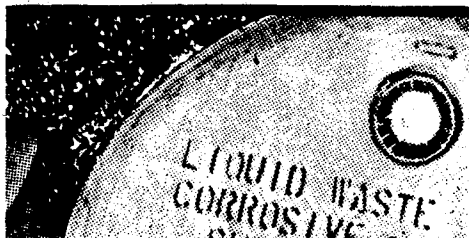
But by late summer of 1980, this situation had altered. A new parliament had been elected and the clerical forces had finally secured the nomination of Mohammed Ali Rajai as prime minister, thereby establishing a political base from which they could take the initiative on the hostage issue and use it to advantage. The level of mass militancy could not be sustained indefinitely, and sooner or later the U.S. could be expected to launch new military attacks that would, even if they failed, cause serious damage to Iran. With growing revolt in the provinces, disaffection in the bazaars, and rising un-



IN THE NATION

THE ENVIRONMENT

Communities don't wait for Washington to act on hazards



Feds overrule local controls on nuke cargo

By Mark Alan Pinsky

WASHINGTON

IN AN ELEVENTH-HOUR RULE-MAKING, the Carter administration's Department of Transportation (DOT) has issued new regulations on the transport of radioactive materials that would pre-empt some 100 state and local actions to either restrict or prohibit radioactive cargoes in densely populated areas.

The new regulations, which would not take effect until February 1982, have drawn sharp criticism from environmentalists and anti-nuclear groups and from the National League of Cities, which immediately urged outgoing Secretary of Transportation Neil Goldschmidt to reject them. The day the rules were announced, New York representative Ted Weiss and Geraldine Ferraro introduced a bill in Congress to block their implementation.

It was a New York City ordinance that first prompted department action. In 1976 a provision was added to the New York City Health Code that put strict limits on radioactive shipments within city limits. That same year, Brookhaven Laboratories on Long Island—a research facility that relies on radioactive materials shipped through New York—asked the Department of Transportation to study whether the Health Code violated federal regulations.

When DOT determined that no clear federal rules existed, it initiated a rule-making proceeding in August 1978, invoking its authority under the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act of 1974. Proposed regulations were first issued in January 1980 and drew a heavy response from both Congress and the public. More than 1,000 written comments were received

from individuals and elected officials, and more than 1,600 pages of transcripts were compiled from seven public hearings. Some of these hearings, including a spirited session in New York, were scheduled only after members of Congress pressured DOT to widen public participation in the rulemaking process.

But the results of that process, critics say, gave short shrift to widespread public concern about the unnecessary risks of routing radioactive cargoes through communities. In fulfilling the seemingly neutral purpose of providing a uniform national standard, they charge, DOT has merely accommodated the nuclear industry by simplifying the regulatory process without strengthening safeguards. The new rules, according to one congressional aide, are "uniformly insufficient."

The DOT measure recommends interstate highways as the safest route, but allows individual states to plan alternative routes if they deem it necessary. If a state takes no action, the DOT's recommended interstate routes become official policy. The federal agency's decision to delay implementation of the regulations for approximately one year was made largely to facilitate states' consideration of alternatives, according to DOT spokesman Lee Stanton.

But observers expressed doubt that large states with methods to handle radioactive traffic could complete alternative route planning in one year—possibly leaving weak federal guidelines in place of more stringent state plans. (DOT spent approximately two-and-one-half years simply setting up general guidelines.)

Opponents also charge that the new regulations unjustly override the rights of states and municipalities to determine policy in this sensitive issue. (The National League of Cities was joined in trying to stop the regulations by the National Association of Counties, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the National Association of Attorneys General and the City of New York.)

In addition, the DOT's proposals for labelling different types of radioactive substances and for assessing risk have been attacked as too weak. According to David Berrick, anti-nuclear lobbyist for the Environmental Policy Center, the new regulations "contain no safety measures founded on methodology that could help states develop routing policy."

From another corner, the government's own Government Accounting Office has cited serious deficiencies in DOT pro-

grams to ensure the safe transport of both radioactive and toxic substances. According to a GAO study issued in November, injuries resulting from accidents involving hazardous materials more than tripled from 1971 to 1979 and property damage more than doubled over that same period. The GAO report—which considered the just-issued regulations in its investigation—concluded that "the Department can neither determine the extent of problems involved in transporting hazardous materials nor assure the Congress—and the American public—that it is using its limited staffing and funding resources efficiently and effectively."

Opposition to the regulations will continue, according to Fred Millar of the Potomac Alliance. "We have demonstrated widespread objection to the DOT," Millar said in an interview, "and we will keep up the pressure."

The City of New York—which has received no applications to ship radioactive cargo since its 1976 health code provision took effect—plans to take "some kind of legal action," according to Barry Schwartz, an attorney in the city's legal offices. Schwartz said the city is now studying the regulations and hopes to file suit by mid-February. And the DOT's Stanton indicated the Department expects additional legal challenges.

Mark Alan Pinsky works on Capitol Hill for Rep. Ted Weiss.



In one city, at least, you have a right to know

By Caron Chess

PHILADELPHIA

PHILADELPHIA WILL SOON BECOME the first place in the country where both workers and community residents have a "right to know" the names of toxic substances handled by local industry.

like Stockman, the simplest way to hack money away from the food stamp program would be to invoke existing law and reduce benefits across the board so as to bring the overall program into line with the current funding ceiling. But to do so might well trigger congressional debate, which in turn would provide the defenders with an opportunity to rally and beat off the attack.

Or Reagan could stick to his purist sentiments and seriously attempt to prune waste from the program by routing out the children who are stuffing themselves at the school lunch table. But that's more easily said than done, since every food stamp recipient would have to be hauled into the local welfare office and inspected for fraud and deception. Every recipient, in theory, at any rate, has the right of due process. Paring waste could turn into a costly administrative nightmare.

Finally, the new president could let the food stamp program alone, raise the

A legislative package adopted last week by the city council and virtually assured of the mayor's signature, will require every Philadelphia business to disclose which of a list of toxic chemicals they use, manufacture, store or discharge into the air. This data, along with information on the health effects of each chemical, will be kept on file, available to the public. The legislation also gives the city the authority to regulate the storage of toxics.

The toxics debate that has been raging across the country hit Philadelphia with full force after the Delaware Valley Toxics Coalition (DVTC)—a coalition of community, environmental and labor groups—initiated the right-to-know legislation. After seven months of bitter controversy, DVTC prevailed over determined opposition of both the city administration and local industry.

Even before public hearings on the matter, the stage was set for a classic confrontation. On one talk show after another, members of the coalition doggedly pointed out that Philadelphia has one of the highest cancer rates in the nation and that the public should have, at the very least, a right to know the names of chemicals to which they are exposed. The Chamber of Commerce warned that forcing businesses to divulge "trade secrets" would ultimately cost the city jobs as industry left for less restrictive locales. When Rohm & Haas, a leading industry opponent, took city council members on a plant tour, the coalition parried with a news conference at which Ralph Nader hailed the legislation as "a model for the rest of the nation."

By the day of the hearings, coalition outreach efforts had rallied the support of more than 40 organizations as diverse as the United Auto Workers, the Sierra Club and the Philadelphia Council of Neighborhood Organizations. According to Jim Moran, co-director of the Philadelphia Area Project on Occupational Safety and Health, a leading group in the coalition, the diversity of support ensured that "the legislation couldn't be dismissed simply as a labor question." (Although right-to-know bills have been passed in four states, Philadelphia's legislation is unique because it extends beyond the workplace and grants community residents access to information.)

The broad scope of the Philadelphia bill allowed the campaign to tap into the ongoing efforts to combat industrial pollution in several neighborhoods. As Jerry Balter, a Public Interest Law Center attorney who drafted DVTC's bill, put it, "The legislation dealt directly with people's lives, so they understood the need to become involved."

The extent of that involvement was evident during the hearings. More than 100 supporters of the bill donned surgical masks to dramatize their concern about toxics, packed the city council and

ceiling to maintain benefits this year, and plan a careful attack further along in his administration.

This is conservatism at its harshest. Not merely cruelty but illusion is running rampant. For the food stamp program is efficiently run and certainly is not ridden with substantial fraud. It already has been pared back to the bone. In itself the program is austere well beyond the level of savagery. It has fallen far behind the rate of inflation. Administrators say that five-sixths of the recipients cannot purchase minimally nutritious meals for \$1.25 a day. Added to which, the program is a useful way of reducing the food surplus. Indeed, on any rational ground it is difficult to explain the onslaught except by saying that Reagan's Republicans purely and simply hate the poor.

Alexander Cockburn and James Ridgeway write a regular column for the *Village Voice*, where this piece first appeared.

Stamps

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decline, food stamps make up the difference. In effect, food stamps are a form of revenue-sharing. A moderate Republican such as Governor William Milliken in Michigan would face havoc if Reagan were to dump Chrysler, throwing workers out of jobs, while at the same time cutting back social welfare programs.

Some farm groups, including the National Farmers Union, are moderately supportive of the food stamp program. Food stamps originally (before World War II) were conceived as a way to get rid of the farm surplus, and that purpose remains. That's why the program still is administered by the Department of Agriculture, not by Health and Human Services.

The effect of \$9 billion on farm products is substantial, especially in the

areas of dairy products, meat and cereals. But those familiar with the hoggish self-mystification of American farmers will not be surprised to find that many of these sturdy yeomen (themselves shot full of government aid like a hog with steroids) oppose their own self-interest out of undistilled class hatred for the recipients.

These then are the forces ranged for battle in Reagan's coming attack on social welfare programs. But the field of play itself makes the situation perilous.

Let them eat crow.

Because of general inflation and the steadily rising price of food (food prices are expected to climb by 15 percent this year), there's not enough money in the food stamp program to pay the benefits. Last year Congress had to appropriate extra funds. And this year's funding—\$9.8 billion—will run out in August, two months before the end of the fiscal year. For architects of Dunkirk economics

made front-page headlines.

The president of the fire fighters' union stressed the need for adequate information in order to take proper precautions when fighting industrial fires. Health professionals, economists and federal government officials countered industry's arguments with factual evidence.

While industry's hard-line position was predictable and relatively easy to combat, the city administration's vigorous opposition came close to defeating right-to-know. The legislation stalled in committee after the city proposed a watered-down version of DVTC's bill and attempted quietly to confuse council members with its complex counterproposal.

But the coalition responded to stepped-up industry lobbying with its own letter-writing, phone-ins and demonstrations and pulled the few strings available to it. Americans for Democratic Action's inside knowledge of the council was critical. As Moran put it, "Whatever ways you could campaign, I think we did it. We had countless strategy meetings fine-tuning it all."

After the chanting disruption of two council meetings, the committee agreed to reconsider the bill. Enough right-to-know supporters came to the committee meeting to thwart the city administration's attempts carefully to orchestrate defeat of the DVTC bill. Instead, the committee sent DVTC, industry and the city to the negotiating table to hammer out a new proposal. The legislative package recently voted out by council was the result.

"A year ago the city had hardly given a thought to the toxics problem. Now the public has forced the administration and industry into granting legislation regulating the emission and storage of toxics and granting workers and community residents the right to know about hazardous substances. We call that a victory," Balter said.

Caron Chess is a staff member at the Delaware Valley Toxics Coalition.



Reagan's man thinks silence is best solution

By David Lindorff

NEW YORK

NO ONE IS SURPRISED THAT Reagan's choice to head the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), Ben C. Rusche, comes to Washington from a very pro-nuclear corner—in this case, the South Carolina Energy Institute, of which he was executive director.

But what is particularly disturbing about Rusche, who as head of the NRC will have all of our health and safety in his hands, is his record as "health and safety" officer for the nation's largest chemical company, E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Co. of Wilmington, Del.

That might sound like a count in his favor, particularly since—on paper—du Pont is one of the safest companies in the country to work for. But many of its plants in the South—especially in Rusche's own South Carolina—boast safety records that strain credulity. Take, for example, the 700-employee du Pont plant in Florence, S.C., which claims to have gone 3,127 calendar days and nearly 11 million man-hours without a day lost to an on-the-job injury. Or the 3,100-employee textile fibers plant in Kinston, N.C., that claims to have gone 620 calendar days and 10.2 million man-hours without a lost day.

Given that both plants are full of toxic chemicals, hot plastics and resins, heavy

equipment and the like, such statistics look too good to be true—and in fact they are. They exist because Rusche and his successors at the company systematically kept employees from collecting disability benefits or even reporting work-related injuries.

Du Pont is currently the target of a national organizing drive by the Steelworkers Union, which claims to have signed up a majority of workers at half the company's 100 plants. The major organizing issue at most of those plants has been health and safety.

Last year, while covering the Steelworkers' campaign, I met several victims of Du Pont's safety program—people with impaired hearing, mutilated hands, injured backs and other disabilities. All were from the Kinston plant, but none were listed as blemishes on its perfect safety record.

One worker, for example, had had his thumb smashed between two rollers in one accident, and had seriously injured his back lifting heavy equipment in another. In both cases, the company kept him off the injury list by paying him to continue to come to "work"—each day he reported to the company infirmary, where doctors fed him pain killers and tranquilizers. A private doctor later diagnosed the "sprain" in his back as a rup-

tured disk, and he's now fighting the company in court for compensation. But for the time being, du Pont's Kinston safety record remains spotless.

Similar incidents abound, according to union organizers. They are supported by a 1973 Nader study of du Pont that resulted in a book, *The Company State*. In it the authors wrote, "The company has tried to make a good safety record appear phenomenal by questionable tactics. Injured workers are often transport-

ed from their sickbeds to work so that a statistician can report that no workdays have been lost due to accidents or injuries; blue-collar workers have also been singled out and severely reprimanded for minor injuries."

If this is Rusche's approach to health and safety matters, he will fit right in at the NRC, which already has a history of covering up problems instead of facing them.

David Lindorff is a New York writer.



LABOR

Alleged mob ties stall confirmation

By Mark Alan Pinsky

WASHINGTON

CONFIRMATION HEARINGS FOR Secretary of Labor-designate Raymond Donovan were halted abruptly last week by charges that the New Jersey businessman made illegal payoffs to union officials in the late '60s. The hearing committee, made up of members of both the Labor and the Human Resources committees in the Senate, had planned to vote on Donovan's appointment Jan. 15, but that vote has now been delayed indefinitely.

A Federal Bureau of Investigation informant has alleged that Donovan made covert payments to him in 1967 and 1968 to settle labor disputes. As executive vice-president of the Schiavone Construction Company of Secaucus, N.J., one of the nation's largest construction firms, Donovan was responsible for negotiating contracts with the Teamsters Union, which represents workers at the firm.

Donovan's nomination was largely a surprise to observers of the Reagan transition. Little known nationally, the New Jersey businessman admitted in his hearings to ignorance of several Labor Department programs. He also told the committee he would move the Labor Department toward friendlier relations with business, moderating the "adversarial attitudes" evident in previous DOL policy.

Unions generally oppose Donovan's nomination, which has received strong backing from the anti-union National Right to Work Committee. Critics warn

that Donovan is likely to whittle away at Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations and attempt to undercut current minimum-wage requirements. But Teamsters Union national president Frank Fitzsimmons said his group would "look forward to working" with Donovan.

During his hearings, Donovan admitted to paying \$13,000 to a Newark businessman later identified in a court deposition as a middleman who laundered money for organized crime figures. He also told Senate committee members that for approximately three years his company kept a "ghost worker" on payroll—a questionable practice under labor laws. Donovan explained that the no-show worker began receiving payments in 1977 to help ensure labor peace with the Teamsters Union local. Donovan said that he was unaware of the action until several days before his hearings began.



Raymond Donovan's dealings with the Teamsters will be investigated by the FBI.

In response to charges that he might have been paying off organized crime, Donovan said that he had believed the company was buying dumping rights on a tract owned by the Newark man. He also told committee members that he thought the no-show condition was required by the union contract.

Donovan has called the allegation that halted the confirmation process "scurrilous and untrue."

According to FBI officials, the charge

has been made by Ralph M. Picardo, an associate of Anthony (Tony) Provenzano, who was president of Teamsters local 560 in Union City, N.J., at the time of the alleged payoffs. Picardo testified as a government witness in the 1978 trial that convicted Provenzano and Harold (Kazo) Konigsberg of murdering Anthony Castellito in 1961. The government informant was himself convicted of second-degree murder in 1975.

Mark Alan Pinsky works on Capitol Hill.

BUFFALO

They gave a rally and nobody came

By Bradshaw Hovey

BUFFALO, N. Y.

THE CALL OF BUFFALO NAZI Party organizer Karl Hand for "100 white men with guts" to rally for "white civil rights" in Niagara Square on Martin Luther King's birthday fell at

least 95 men short. But Hand still claimed success—his "demonstration" drew hundreds of reporters from across the region and the nation, and he said that was good enough.

The Nazi "rally" was opposed by a left-sponsored anti-Nazi rally at the same time in Niagara Square. That, in turn, was countered by an "official" Martin Luther King celebration two hours later and two blocks away in Lafayette Square sponsored by the Black Leadership Forum, which feared a violent confrontation with the Nazis, and by the city's conservative Democratic mayor, James D. Griffin, who denounced the anti-Nazi Coalition as a "bunch of nuts and socialists."

The relatively modest size of all three demonstrations and the absolute lack of any sort of violence left the network correspondents in despair of getting their stories on the evening news, while other reporters regretted that the media had participated in making so much of so little.

Yet the rallies took place against a grim background of tension in the black community here and badly strained black-white relations. Eight Buffalo-area black men have been murdered since last September and police have no suspects. While District Attorney Edward Cosgrove believes the murders are the work of a lone "psychopath" he will not rule out the possibility of a racist conspiracy.

The press and the public generally have been preoccupied with the murders and the search for the ".22 caliber killer." Rumors surfaced recently about black "bounty hunters" working as decoys to catch the killer and collect \$100,000 in reward money. Some whites say they fear retaliation for the killings, though nothing of the sort has been reported so far.

It was in this environment that Hand, a former KKK "titan," announced his rally in a Nazi newsletter that praised the killer as "The Great White Hunter."

An ad hoc "Martin Luther King Day Memorial Rally Coalition" quickly announced plans for a counter-rally and assembled a nationwide list of sponsors including many union and civil rights activists. But as the day of the rally approached, it became clear that the Coalition was a relatively narrow one dominated by members of Workers' World Party. Some local left organizations declined to be official sponsors of the rally, while individuals gave lukewarm support. One local activist complained of being "trapped between two alternatives, neither of

Local activists faced an unhappy choice—the sponsors of one rally wanted to confront the Nazis, the others ignored the issue of organized racist violence.

which is very satisfying." The sponsors of one rally wanted a direct confrontation with the Nazis, while the sponsors of the other ignored the whole subject of organized racist violence.

Mayor Griffin, who was elected in 1977 with negligible black support, worked hard to discredit and stop the anti-Nazi rally. Although he refused to ban the Nazi rally when it was first announced, he later promised arrest for anyone participating in either the Nazi or anti-Nazi demonstrations. Coalition sponsors were heavily red-baited by the mayor and by his police commissioner, who also predicted violence. County Executive Edward Rutkowski warned that the rally would be run by "outsiders" who would "give Buffalo a black eye and then leave." Two local television stations donated air time for a series of commercials featuring local establishment figures who urged Buffalonians to avoid the "hate rallies." Only a late court ruling prevented Mayor Griffin from carrying out his threat to make arrests first and ask questions later.

One result of the non-rallies is that the ultra-right isn't taken very seriously here. Karl Hand showed up practically alone to wave his swastika poster. But while police say there are no more than three Nazis in Buffalo, an independent Klan-Nazi monitoring group estimates their number at 30. Even more sinister was a recent report that German neo-Nazi terrorist Manfred Roeder used a suburban Buffalo home for nearly two years as a base for organizing efforts in America.

But in the aftermath of the Martin Luther King day events, it also seems uncertain whether either the black community or left groups have any plans for coping with division between black and white in Buffalo or for combatting organized racist violence.

Bradshaw Hovey is a Buffalo writer who has been active in city politics.

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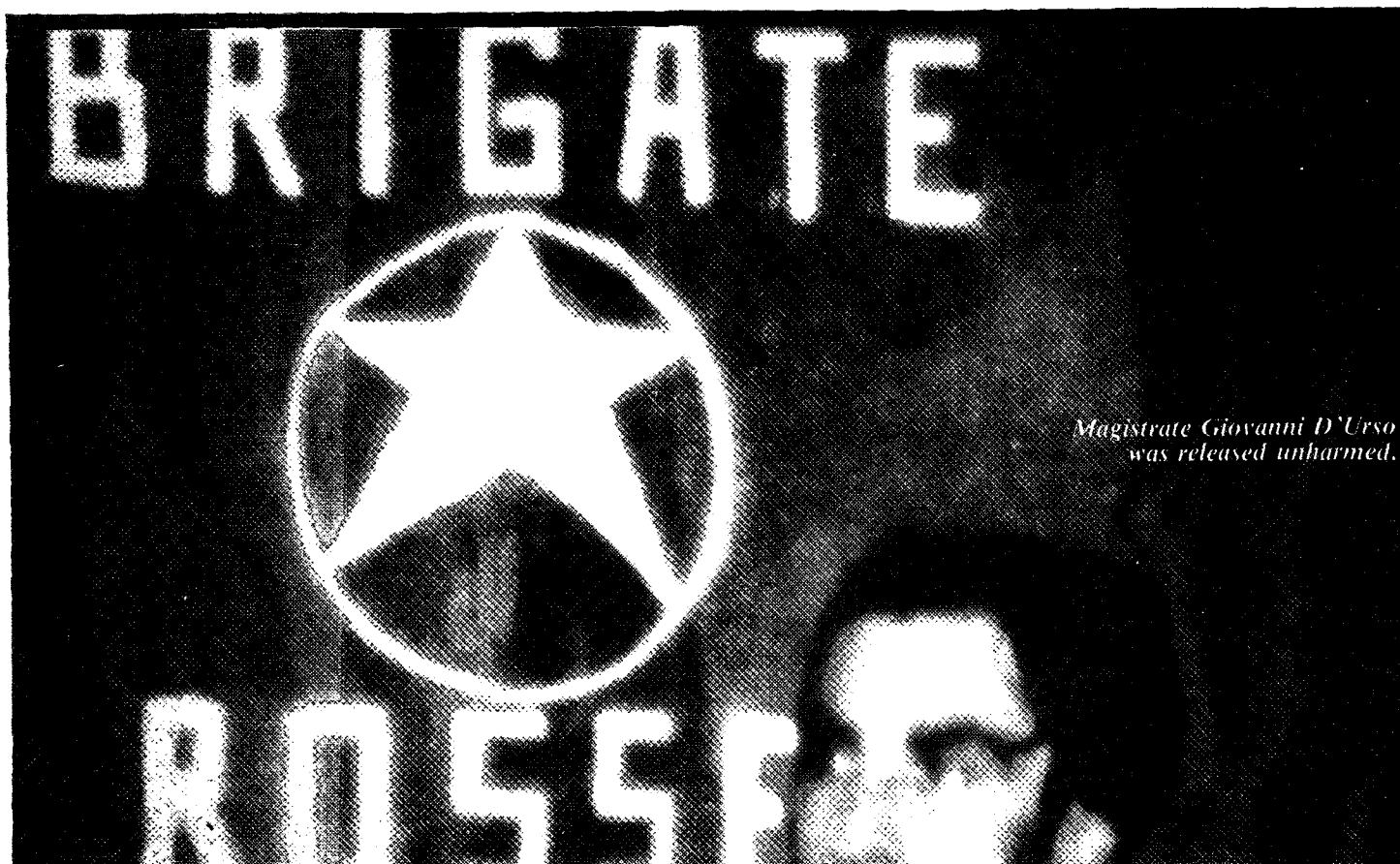
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Magistrate Giovanni D'Urso was released unharmed.

ITALY

Red Brigades made their point

By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

WITH THEIR LATEST OPERATION aimed at the prisons and the press, the Red Brigades have achieved an immense political success. It is not just that throughout the month-long captivity of magistrate Giovanni D'Urso the terrorist organization managed to monopolize Italy's public life, much as it did nearly three years ago when it kidnapped and murdered Aldo Moro. The Moro operation, too, might be considered a political success insofar as its aim was to break up the nascent "historic compromise," the governing alliance between Christian Democrats and Communists. But it was not a public relations success. On the contrary, the murder of Moro and his bodyguards inspired widespread revulsion, and the turgid communiqués against the "imperialist monopoly state" were not popular reading.

This time, by contrast, the operation was aimed at winning over a particular constituency—"imprisoned proletarians," the "marginal" population that is growing with international economic restructuring, and the far left. And for the first time, in both action and words, the Red Brigades got across a message likely to make a favorable impression and gain supporters in those target areas of the population.

When the Red Brigades first abducted Giovanni D'Urso last Dec. 12, the general impression was that the organization was just trying to prove that it was still alive and kicking despite recent arrests of important members (apparently thanks to information given police by "penitent" terrorists). The photograph of D'Urso in "people's prison" under the Red Brigade star had the eerie look of a replay of the Moro affair, except that Moro was a major national leader and D'Urso was an obscure justice ministry official.

But the Red Brigades knew all along what the public did not know, that D'Urso was in charge of handling inmates in both ordinary and special prisons in Italy. In a communiqué, the Red Brigades demanded that the special high-security island prison of Asinara, off Sardinia, be shut down immediately. The abduction and "trial" of D'Urso, they announced, was the first action of a "strategic resolu-

tion" taken last October to wage an offensive against prisons.

As in the Moro case, politicians split between "firmness" and "bargaining" camps, the latter intent on seeking some deal to spare the life of the captive. But the government is now much weaker than three years ago, already reeling from massive scandals involving oil bribes and illegal arms sales, as well as the incompetent handling of earthquake relief. The strongest champions of firmness, the Communists, are in opposition. And the governing coalition now includes the Socialist Party, whose leader Bettino Craxi has tended to blame the "firmness" line of 1978 for Moro's death and who favored a soft approach to save D'Urso, setting off an internal row in his party.

Within a fortnight of the Red Brigade demand, the government announced it was closing down Asinara prison for good—not on account of the Red Brigades' demand, it insisted, but because the decision had already been made in line with the humanitarian policy of improving prison conditions. The Socialists applauded. The Communists accused the government of giving in to the Red Brigades and president Sandro Pertini seemed to agree.

Two days later, some 70 maximum-security prisoners in the high-security prison at Trani on the southern Adriatic coast seized 19 guards as hostages and demanded the closing of Asinara and all high-security prisons. This was apparently another prong of the operation. A Red Brigade communiqué hailed the "great unity and mobilization of proletarian prisoners." (Trani prisoners include "autonomy" theorist Toni Negri and other *autonomia* leaders arrested with him in April 1979, who apparently all stayed out of the excitement.)

On Dec. 29, *carabinieri* and special forces stormed Trani prison, putting an end to the 24-hour revolt. No one was killed or seriously injured, although about 30 prisoners suffered minor injuries in the battle.

But the "firmness" party's joy over this victory was short-lived. On New Year's Eve, *carabinieri* general Enrico Galvanigi opened his front door to accept a decorative gift basket of wines. As he handed the smiling delivery men a generous tip, they shot him dead. Gen. Galvanigi had commanded the storming of Trani two days earlier—a fact unknown to the public but known to the Red Brigades. President Pertini, who is

surely breaking all world records for funeral attendance, paid his respects before yet another casket and embraced yet another widow.

The prison focus.

Meanwhile, a storm of controversy broke out over the decision of the popular weekly *L'Espresso* to publish both an interview with the Red Brigades and a transcript of the Red Brigades' interrogation of D'Urso. Police went to the magazine's offices to confiscate the original copy and arrested journalist Mario Scialoja who had conducted the interview through an anonymous intermediary.

The language of the interview showed a marked influence of *autonomia* concepts compared to three years ago. For instance, the Red Brigades spokesman noted with satisfaction that the struggle of the proletarian masses to satisfy immediate "needs" was leading the class to assert its "autonomy" against the labor unions and all other forms of capitalist power. The spokesman said the time had come to create revolutionary mass organizations to fight alongside the armed communist party because "the current crisis has swelled the ranks of proletarians who do not take part in production, who are definitively on the margins of society, who no longer earn salaries and can survive only outside the law." In short, the Red Brigades are out to offer a political explanation of their situation to unemployed proletarians who turned to crime to survive and recruit them into its ranks. "The imperialist prison is where the political recomposition of the proletariat takes place," the spokesman told *L'Espresso*.

A few days later, after questioning Scialoja and studying these texts, investigators thought they had figured out who had interrogated D'Urso (who seemed cooperative) and given the interview. They issued a warrant for the arrest of a prominent criminologist, Giovanni Senzani, 38, who was nowhere to be found. Senzani is a respected sociologist who has spent much time in the U.S. in the course of his studies of social marginalization and crime as a mass phenomenon.

Tried in the press.

On Jan. 4, the Red Brigades announced that they had sentenced D'Urso to death but proposed that he might be saved. The terrorists invited the media to find out and publish what the political prisoners of Trani and Palmi high-security prisons

had to say. In short, the Brigades demanded a forum for the convicts to judge the judge, going around the state and reversing authority with the help of the media.

Lawyers and members of Marco Pannella's Radical Party ("radical chic," according to its critics, who pin the same label on *L'Espresso*), who forthwith visited Trani and Palmi prisons, announced that Red Brigades founder Renato Curcio and other imprisoned members of the organization had decided that D'Urso was guilty of crimes against the people, but that since he had repented and cooperated with his interrogators he should benefit from "grace" and be freed.

But there seemed to be a final condition: the "communiqués" issued by the Trani and Palmi prisoners must be printed in the leading Italian newspapers. This threw the press into an uproar. Most editors and journalists said no, the press should not accept the dictates of terrorists. D'Urso's wife Franca implored editors to publish the Red Brigade communiqués: "What does it matter? They all sound alike anyhow." This viewpoint of a self-declared "simple housewife" was shared by "radical chic"—the Radical Party radio network broadcast and rebroadcast the Red Brigade statements.

Il Manifesto decided to go ahead and print parts of the statements on informational grounds, arguing that one needs to know about terrorism to combat it. More surprisingly, the Socialist Party organ *Avanti!* decided—or was ordered by Craxi—to print the statements, but more on humanitarian grounds. (One—perhaps the only—clear political effect on Craxi's extremely soft stand was to remove any possibility of an alternative left government coalition with the super-firm Communists, who for the first time in a decade called on party members to be on the alert to head off any eventual attempt at a military coup.) The small, far leftist newspaper *Lotta Continua* printed everything in entirety until it stopped publishing in mid-January, succumbing to long-pending bankruptcy. But all the major mass circulation newspapers boycotted the terrorist propaganda.

On Jan. 12, a month after her father was captured, 19-year-old Lorena D'Urso unexpectedly appeared on television for a four-minute spot paid for by the Radical Party. Unhesitatingly, the judge's daughter appealed for his release and read a Red Brigade statement calling her father a butcher and hangman. At about the same time, judicial authorities were issuing warrants charging Trani and Palmi prisoners with complicity in the D'Urso kidnapping, and Communist and Radical deputies were coming to blows in the halls of parliament over how to react to terrorism.

Throughout this incredible scenario, the Red Brigades seemed master manipulators of the sociological and political pieces of their game. The exploit of reversing the judge-prisoner roles is certain to be appreciated where it matters—inside the prisons—and should facilitate the organization's recruiting. The Red Brigades managed to shift responsibility for Judge D'Urso's fate to the media in a way that both rendered the state practically non-existent—irrelevant to relations between civil society and the counter-state represented by the Red Brigades—and also set the stage for further use and abuse of the media.

On Jan. 14, a major national newspaper, *Il Messaggero*, decided to print the Red Brigades' communiqué in a last-ditch effort to save Giovanni D'Urso. A few hours later the Red Brigades issued yet another communiqué announcing that they were releasing their captive. The next morning, in a car parked by the Tiber only a short distance from the justice ministry, D'Urso was found alive and well, certain to get a warmer welcome from his family than from his justice ministry colleagues.

By freeing their hostage, the Red Brigades showed their mastery of the situation and were certain to make a favorable impression on sectors of the far left—notably the area influenced by *autonomia*—that would have applauded the Moro operation if only Moro had been freed in the end instead of murdered. The Red Brigades have promised a long struggle. At this point, it doesn't look as if it will be short. ■

SPAIN

The communists debate themselves

By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

THE UNIFIED SOCIALIST PARTY of Catalonia (PSUC)—which is what the Communist Party calls itself in that key region of Spain—caused something of a sensation by unexpectedly voting 424 to 359 (with 21 abstentions) to drop the word "Eurocommunist" from all its declarations at its four-day congress in Barcelona in early January. The paradox was that, whatever it preached, the congress practiced a degree of internal democracy that was certainly more Eurocommunist than Stalinist. Several conflicting currents battled openly, and delegates elected the central committee in public, with the press watching—a procedure quite novel at such gatherings.

Nevertheless, furious Eurocommunists accused the small "pro-Soviet" faction of using its position in the party apparatus to stack the resolutions committees and manipulate the congress. "Pure Eurocommunist" faction leader Antoni Gutierrez Diaz resigned as PSUC secretary general in protest. He was replaced by 42-year-old labor leader Francisco Frutos of the important "Leninist" faction, which had temporarily voted with the "pro-Soviets" against the incumbent leaders.

The argument used by the pro-Soviets against the term "Eurocommunism" was that it divides the world movement. "Europe isn't the center of the world," one of them, Joaquin Boix, explained. The congress also voted to kick U.S. bases out of Spain, strengthen "communist internationalism," and support the USSR and its allies and "all peace forces in the face of mounting American imperialism made more aggressive by the election of Reagan." It mildly criticized Soviet intervention in Afghanistan but praised "the authentic revolutionary change in Afghanistan."

Eurocommunists dismissed all this as "testimonialismo"—the tendency to come out in ringing terms for all sorts of things one can't do anything about. This tendency seems to come to the fore when the party is in trouble and doesn't see any solution to its real problems.

The PSUC is stronger in industrially and culturally advanced Catalonia than Santiago Carrillo's Spanish Communist Party (PCE) is in the rest of Spain. The PSUC has been getting around 19 percent of the vote in Catalonia, compared to only about 10 percent Communist vote nationwide. Eight of the total 23 Communist seats in the Spanish parliament, the *Cortes*, are held by Catalans.

But in the past three years, PSUC membership has dropped from about

35,000 to 22,000. PCE membership fell from 200,000 in 1977 to 140,000 in 1979, and the drain continued last year, as readership losses forced the party to stop publishing its newspaper, *Mundo Obrero*. Throughout Spain, the Communist Party has suffered from disappointment with post-Franco democratic life and in particular with the PCE's semi-support of the government, despite its anti-labor economic policies, all for the sake of a respectable image that has not prevented the Socialist Party (PSOE) from getting three out of four left votes.

The PSUC's "Leninist" faction, strong in Barcelona's industrial belt and the Communist unions, usually agrees with the Eurocommunists on international issues but would prefer sharper opposition to the center-right government of Premier Adolfo Suarez and greater efforts to ally with the Socialists.

What seems to have happened at the congress is that the "Leninists," prodded by their labor base to take a more militant stand against "right-leaning" leaders, were lured into voting with the pro-Soviets. But no sooner had they done so than they began to back off. Francisco Frutos assured the press that there were "no substantial changes in our policy." The resignation of Gutierrez Diaz was apparently more than many delegates expected when they voted against "Eurocommunism"—such a gesture is quite



PSUC secretary Antoni Gutierrez Diaz resigned in protest over the "Eurocommunism" vote.

contrary to the old democratic centralist practice of swallowing whatever policy is adopted without complaint. Even his

victorious opponents seem to realize that the pro-Soviet image that emerged from the congress could be disastrous for the party at the polls.

Leaders of the "Leninist" faction blamed Carrillo for giving Eurocommunism a bad name by constantly identifying it with his own policies and his own leadership. They complained that Carrillo had a lot of nerve to talk about "independence" (from the USSR, that is) when he was constantly interfering in the PSUC and trying to run it. The controversial votes at the congress really expressed exasperation with Carrillo.

Gutierrez Diaz attributed the vote against Eurocommunism to the bad objective situation in the country and to a campaign identifying Eurocommunism with a turn to the right. He is intent on getting the PSUC to hold a special congress to redefine its policies before the tenth congress of the PCE next summer. "We are going to intensify debate in all the party's organizations and I am very optimistic," he said, "that, with the same democracy with which the Leninist line was adopted, the party will adopt the return to Eurocommunism."

Meanwhile, leading economist and Madrid city councillor Ramon Tames called the party debate simplified and confused, a diversion from the real problem of democratization and renovation of the party. Tames, considered a potential successor to Carrillo, favors collegial leadership. "The best antidote to pro-Sovietism is democratization, decentralization and better organization," he said. Tames criticized "habits left over from clandestinity." The debate over Eurocommunism was a false issue, he said, because the overwhelming majority of Spanish communists see the need for a "Spanish way to socialism" within the framework of the constitution, political pluralism and full protection of human rights.

FRANCE

Weapons firm moves into the information business

By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

SOME PEOPLE IN FRANCE CALLED it the most important event of 1980. What was it? Matra bought Hachette. That is, France's main manufacturer of rockets, missiles and telecommunications satellites bought the country's largest publishing house. This wedding of hard and software should give birth to a giant trust controlling all phases of the information process.

Matra (*Mecanique Aviation Traction*) is a dynamic young conglomerate that does most of its \$2 billion-a-year business with or through the French government. It makes missiles that go every which way (air-air, sea-sea, ground-air, air-ground) and sells 70 percent of these fancy weapons to foreign countries. It is

heavily into space programs, communications satellites and launchers, as well as computerized telecommunications, a field that the French have named *telematique* with an evident intent to make it their own. Matra's dynamic (what else?) young president Jean-Luc Lagardere runs the popular radio station Europe Number 1, dabbles in manufacturing winning race cars for Le Mans 24-hour races and was named "manager of the year" in 1979 by those who should know.

The bride is relatively stodgy but has a respectable dowry. Hachette publishing houses own rights to 20 percent of the books published in France. Its huge collection of cheap reprints of classics and best sellers in pocket book format called *Livres de Poche* made a fortune in the post-war years. It puts out a wide range of mediocre to moderately trashy periodicals and, perhaps most important of all, enjoys a virtual monopoly on

newsstand distribution. France's centralized school system offers the prospect of a large controlled domestic market for telematic education programs eventually marketable abroad, with the help of the French cultural image.

The Matra-Hachette merger raises the possibility that a corporation making most of its profits off war contracts may control the dissemination of information. Old-fashioned liberals like the editorialists of *Le Monde* expressed alarm at this "sort of 'private nationalization' of a sector essential to democracy," which "looks like the keystone of a system of information control."

But many left intellectuals privately express satisfaction with the deal, which they see as the only way France—and Europe—can hope to break an international monopoly of information by the U.S. Such concentration provides the only chance of competing against the much larger U.S. multinationals, and will make nationalization that much easier one of these days.

"The chance for revolution was missed in the '70s, if it existed," they are saying. "The priority now for Europe is to break the worldwide grip of American economic domination. The key to dependence or independence is the control of information."

Hostages

Continued from page 3

A second point in Iran's favor is simple enough: if the U.S. had wanted to find a solution to the hostage question without all the delays of the past 15 months, it could easily have done so by sending back the Shah. On the available evidence, that man was implicated in very serious crimes of murder, torture and embezzlement and was as liable to extradition as any other criminal. The very real political reasons inside the U.S. that made such a solution unattainable for Carter, and the certainty that the Shah would not receive due process when he returned, do not negate this central aspect of the protracted crisis. The Iranians had, in principle, a perfect right to demand that the Shah be extradited and that the money he took out—however

much they exaggerated its total—be returned to them.

On the other hand, the Iranians' action has had many negative consequences, both for the revolution in their own country and for other revolutions around the world. First, the conventions of international diplomacy are not uniquely beneficial to the Western countries—like most laws, they protect the weak as well as the strong, the Cubans and Vietnamese diplomats in New York as much as the Americans in Tehran. Undermining that system of international equality has no positive function for any revolutionary regime.

Second, the result of reactions inside the U.S. to the hostage taking has been greatly to strengthen a Cold War climate and to wipe away the "Vietnam syndrome"—that reluctance to intervene in the Third World that the struggles against the U.S. role in Indochina had created in the early '70s.

The victory of Reagan and the cold-

blooded attitudes of Alexander Haig suggest that a new and ominous chapter in U.S. relations with the Third World is opening. The Iranians scorned those who sought to negotiate some new relation with the U.S. after their revolution. But the governments of Zimbabwe and Nicaragua—whose people have suffered as much as the Iranians from U.S. domination—have seen the need for a rapprochement and the folly of continued confrontations in a world where the poorer nations remain weak. The self-righteous nationalism of the mullahs, however historically justified, has been an extremely dangerous international phenomenon. From South Korea to El Salvador, those likely to suffer from a new U.S. aggressiveness will have the Ayatollah Khomeini to thank for much of this new belligerency in the U.S.

Finally, there is the brutal fact that the hostage issue has brought no benefits whatsoever to the people of Iran. The money returned to Iran under the settle-

ment is money that Iran owned in any case, neither the Shah nor his millions was secured and Iran is back to square one in pursuing the monarch's purloined fortunes in U.S. courts. Inside Iran, the hostage issue has served as a massive diversion from the urgent social and economic tasks facing the post-revolutionary regime and as an illusory battle that has distracted energy from the real difficulties facing the country. It has strengthened the clerical right. It has served further to divide the followers of the revolution, and it made it that much easier for Iraq to launch its attack, secure in the knowledge that Iran's traditional weapons supplier, the U.S., would not supply new arms. The negative consequences of this affair are things that the Iranian people, as well as the people across the world, will have to live with for a long time to come.

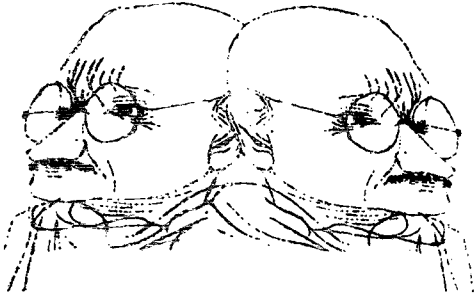
Fred Halliday, a fellow of IPS' Transnational Institute, has reported regularly on Iran for *In These Times*.

SOUTH AFRICA

A special discrimination afflicts Indian community

By James North

DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA



THE MOTORIST WHO ENTERS this coastal city from the steamy sugarcane country to the north is greeted with a jarring, rather anachronistic sight: garish yellow signs along the beachfront demarcate separate sections for "Africans," "Colored," "Asiatics" and "Europeans."

In the last five years or so the South African regime has taken some steps to end what it describes as "unnecessary and hurtful discrimination." While the apparatus of "grand apartheid"—the Bantustan policy, the pass laws—remains intact, the regime has desegregated a small number of hotels and restaurants. More commonly, it has removed the offensive signs of "petty apartheid" that provided so much visual ammunition to its overseas critics. The much-photographed separate park benches, for example, no longer exist.

Durban, South Africa's third-largest metropolis, is both an industrial city and a sea-side resort eerily reminiscent of Miami, Fla. Luxury hotels along the waterfront effectively obscure the poor African and Indian areas further inland. The overwhelming majority of Indian South Africans—some 778,000 of them, insultingly termed "Asiatics" in the official parlance—live in Durban and give the city its special flavor. Many of them are descended from indentured workers who came here beginning in 1860 to cut sugarcane. After a century in South Africa they are no more "Asiatic" than the whites are "European."

The workers were followed by a group of better-off merchants and professional people from India who catered to their particular needs. Among this group of "passenger Indians"—so called because they paid their own passage instead of signing labor contracts—was a dapper young lawyer, trained in Britain, who disembarked here in 1892. He intended to adjudicate a dispute between two merchants and return to India within the year.

Instead, Mohandas K. Gandhi stayed 20 years, during which he helped found the first modern movement against racial oppression and developed the political and ethical principles he later put into practice in India. (Even so, aside from a few schools in Indian areas, there is no monument to Gandhi here, and no official recognition of Durban's most famous resident.)

Good news, bad news.

The anti-apartheid movement Gandhi helped start remains active here, despite crushing government suppression. In recent months, the Durban left has had cause for both celebration and sadness.

On Oct. 31, the "banning" order against Rowley Arenstein, a white, 61-year-old, life-long activist who is one of the deans of the Durban left, expired. As expected, the minister of justice renewed the order, but relaxed its terms: Arenstein is still prohibited from attending social or political gatherings. He cannot prepare material for publication or be quoted in the press. He cannot enter a school or a factory. He cannot leave the Durban magisterial area for any reason.

To most people, these limitations would

be impossibly harsh; to Arenstein, they constitute relative freedom. He was first banned in 1953, then sentenced in 1966 to a four-year prison term. On his release, in addition to his current restrictions he was house-arrested from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. every single day. Now, he can go out in the evening for the first time in 10 years.

But the week after Christmas, the regime struck—hard. It hammered Subry Govender, a 35-year-old Indian journalist who has established his own news agency, with one of the most repressive banning orders in the 30-year history of the law.

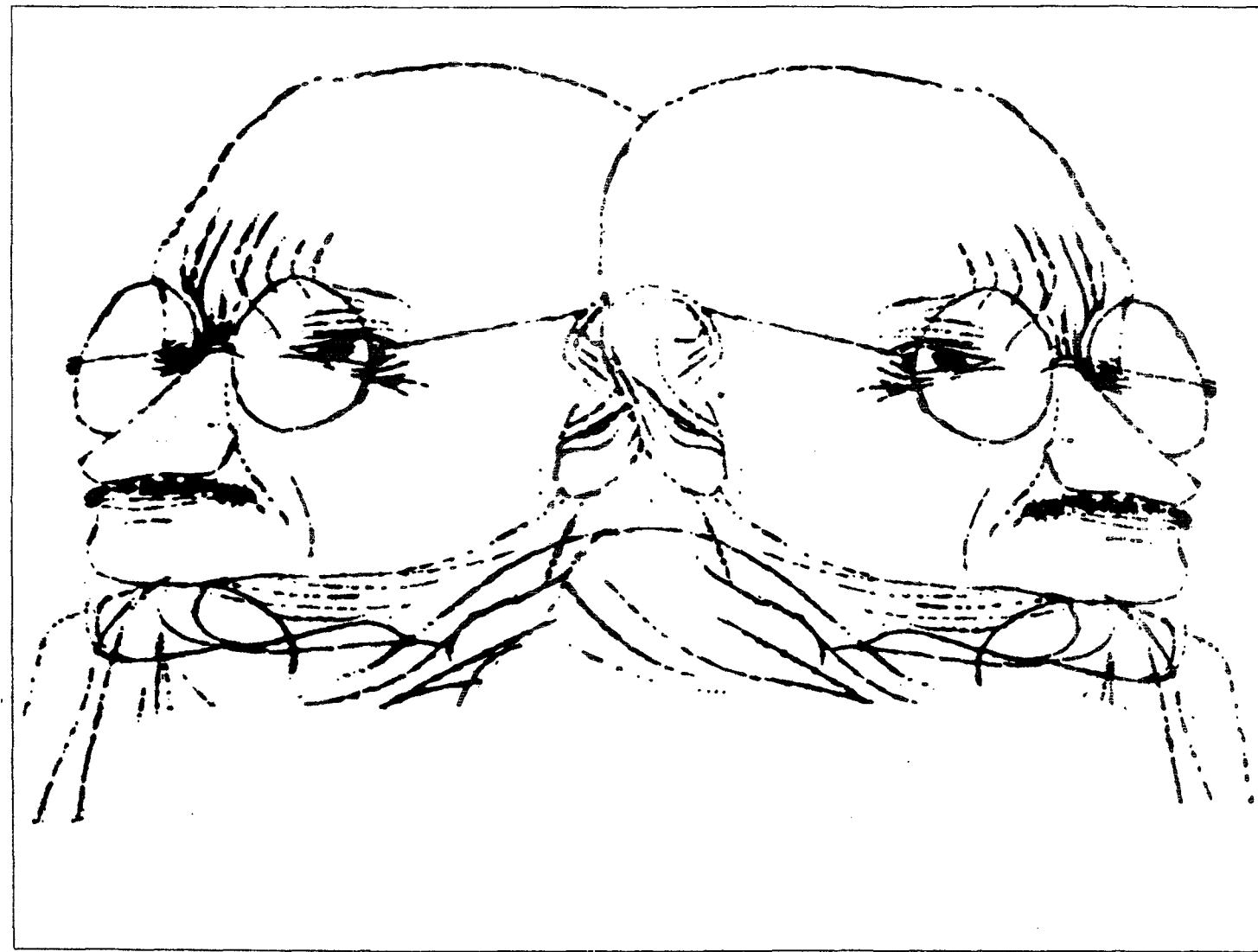
Govender, who sent outspoken reports to the British Broadcasting Company (BBC), Radio Zimbabwe and other outlets, will live for the next three years under the same restrictions Arenstein used to face, with the added proviso that he is house-arrested continually over weekends and holidays. The minister is not required to give reasons for the bannings (there is no appeal, either) but clearly Govender's broadcasts and articles were the major factor.

granddaughter, has been either banned or intermittently detained. Indian students joined last year's nationwide school boycott campaign in large numbers; meanwhile, the small, pro-government political groupings grew increasingly incoherent and isolated.

But some friction between Indians and Africans persists. The two groups differ culturally; Indians are somewhat better-off economically; and, of perhaps greatest importance, many small shops (and a few large ones) tend to be owned by Indians, which places the community as a whole in a sensitive position. Anti-Indian feeling here has something in common with European (or American) anti-Semitism.

Some whites help the process along by

The anti-racist organization that Gandhi founded still grapples with stereotypes and frictions.



But his close ties to Durban's African community were also threatening. In town, as on the beaches, the regime hopes to keep the Indians, "Coloreds" (Africans of mixed descent) and Africans apart. The black consciousness movement has retorted with increasing success that people from all three groups are "black," with a common interest.

The issue is of special importance in Durban. Riots broke out in 1949 between Africans and Indians, and the white authorities for the most part stood by as 142 people were killed. Since then, leaders from both communities have struggled for unity at the same time as the regime has increased its efforts to bring Indians and "Coloreds" to its side as junior partners.

The Gandhi legacy.

The Natal Indian Congress (named for the province in which Durban is located) was founded by Gandhi back in 1894; its current incarnation insists on a non-racial democracy and rejects all efforts to make a separate deal for Indians.

The NIC made great headway in 1980, even though much of its leadership, including Mrs. Ela Ramgobin, Gandhi's

promoting the myth that Indians are wealthy. There are a few highly visible merchant millionaires (most of whom are cordially hated by the activists), but on the whole, the Indian income level is one-quarter that of whites, and a recent study estimated that 65 percent of Indian households in Durban live below the poverty line.

Bill Chinsamy, who has been a waiter at the Royal Hotel for 20 years, is a case in point. His father and grandfather worked there before him. He works a 54-hour week and, when tips are good, he clears \$70. After hours, he is a stylish fellow; on-duty, his elegance is hidden by the turban and robes the hotel's management thinks its customers will find quaint and picturesque on their waiters.

Chinsamy has fond hopes for his only child, a 12-year-old son. "He wants to be a veterinarian," he said recently. "He loves animals. He has a puppy and a kitten that both sleep with him. But I have to tell him it's not quite possible for an Indian to get a job like that. I'll have to try and send him overseas for training..."

"Kids don't understand these things. You take them to the beach; they see other children swimming there; why can't

they go in the water?"

Mrs. Louise Mpanza, a 46-year-old African domestic worker, has raised two children and is now supporting two grandchildren. Mrs. Mpanza, a dignified woman with a carefully modulated, resonant voice, is part of the most underpaid and exploited class of black workers.

She stays in a tiny room in the servants' compound behind the apartment block in which her employers, an elderly couple, live. The apartment house is at the crest of the Berea, a ridge that curves around the city. She earns about \$50 a month for working 12 hours a day, six days a week.

Her grandchildren stay with her disabled husband in a "black area" some 20 miles away. "I try to go home at least twice a month," she said recently. "I don't have time to go more often, and the bus fare is too high. But I always worry about the children, if something has happened to them. There is no way for them to contact me."

Mrs. Mpanza started working as a maid when she was ten, and stopped for seven years after she married. She went back to work when her husband suffered an injury. "I hope my granddaughters become teachers or nurses," she said. "They must train for jobs that never finish, where they can always find work."

Then they can help to support me.

"I worry about money all the time. It's been like that for us as long as I can remember. I can say that my life has been terrible. Just terrible."

"I don't think anything will get better here. These white people are rock hard—they will never change. Why is there the separation here? If I touch a white person, they don't turn brown, do they? It must be better in other countries."

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LETTERS

IN THESE TIMES is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

FACING REALITY

YOUR EDITORIAL DOWNGRADING the Citizens Party and the need for a third party and calling instead for creation of a left constituency in the Democratic Party (*ITT*, Nov. 19, 1980) left me very cold indeed. I was saddened that an independent socialist paper could bring us right back into the electoral clutches of the capitalist system. If the liberal Kennedy forces, numerically great, were defeated at the Democratic Party convention, would even a greatly strengthened left constituency fare any better? Once again we'd end up in a dead end with "nowhere to go but up." We would be without an organizational vehicle.

You complain that the left was invisible to the vast majority of voters and received less than 1 percent of the vote. But in the face of the silent treatment from the media, Reaganophobia and the lesser evil theory (both highly encouraged by many articles in *ITT*), and the fact that the Citizens Party was participating in the elections for the first time with very limited funds, it seems to me that obtaining a quarter of a million votes was no mean achievement.

Even more important, in getting on the ballot in some 30 states the Citizens Party was able to develop a national organizational nucleus for building a mass third party. Our objective now is to build up our local constituencies in the neighborhoods, cities, counties and states. Our main efforts everywhere will be to help bring together coalitions of all peoples' organizations on a local, state and national basis to resist the attacks from the right.

A peoples' coalition against the right is the need of the day. In such a campaign, the Citizens Party will emphasize corporate responsibility for our nation's ills as it did in the last election. The heart of our positive approach, which must be translated into legislative action at all levels, will be community, labor and public control of the big corporations with nationalization where necessary. America needs a new Declaration of Independence from the "tyranny" of the big corporations.

-Dan Schoolman
Ossining, N.Y.

Editor's note: We do not oppose the Citizens Party and, indeed, gave Barry Commoner's ideas and programs more coverage than any other publication in the country.

We did not advocate running a socialist presidential candidate within the Democratic Party in 1980 (or in 1984, as far as we can see today). We did advocate using the Democratic Party machinery to present socialist programs and to run for legislative office—the House of Representatives and state legislatures, city councils, etc. This proposal was an alternative to socialist concentration on supporting liberal candidates for the presidency.

The Citizens Party achievement was not "mean," but it demonstrates our point precisely because it was about the best one could expect from such an approach, and it is clearly inadequate. There is in fact no nucleus for a national party of any significance in the wake of the Citizens Party experience. We wish there were, but it does not exist except for a few very small handfuls of politically inexperienced groups.

A "peoples' coalition against the

right" is more likely to keep the left subordinate to liberals and liberalism than independent socialist activity within and outside the Democratic Party because such coalitions operate on the lowest common denominator principle. The Kennedy campaign was a good example of that.

DISABLED

A LETTER FROM MICHAEL BERRES and Douglas Bikien of Syracuse (*ITT*, Dec. 10, 1980) attacks AFSCME's critique of deinstitutionalization. Berres and Bikien believe institutes "cannot be made decent," and cost an average of \$34,000 per year per resident.

In fact, state mental hospitals are being made into top-quality settings for care—in those states where we have succeeded in getting favorable staffing ratios, ample budgets and modernized physical plant. It does cost a lot of money to promote services to the most helpless and severely disabled people, but I can't imagine why these letter-writers think it is radical to be for smaller mental health budgets.

They claim to be sensitive to the fact that people are being placed in communities "for which they have not been prepared or in which they find little support." But that is precisely what AFSCME's ads try to bring out. If readers like Berres and Bikien weren't so blinded by prejudice against unionized public service workers they would support our effort to publicize evils of "dumping."

-Paul Booth

Associate Director,
AFSCME, Illinois Council 31

REDEMPTION

WE WERE PLEASED TO SEE YOUR REVIEW of the newly published *First-Person America* (*ITT*, Jan. 14), and hasten to inform your readers that the material of the book has been made into a "special" by National Public Radio, to be broadcast on Feb. 2, 3 and 4 from 7-8 p.m. It is a three-hour re-creation of the voices that speak to us across 30 years of time from the shops and communities of working-class America.

The photos used to illustrate the article are, indeed, sensational. In fact, three of them are mine and all are from my book, *Out of the Jungle*. But why didn't you credit the source?

You will be forgiven if you inform your readers that *First-Person America* can be ordered from the Illinois Labor History Society, 20 E. Jackson, Chicago, IL 60604. Send \$13.95 plus \$1 handling.

-Les Orear

President, Illinois Labor History Society

PARTICULARLY OFFENSIVE

I AM INCREASINGLY IRRITATED BY *ITT*'S coverage of the Women's Movement. Your stories concerning violence against women have been particularly offensive.

Kate Ellis' article (*ITT*, Nov. 26) on the Second Annual Conference on Violence Against Women: 1) focuses on Andrea Dworkin as keynote speaker rather than on the women who came together to work at the conference; 2) claims that "unlike minorities, feminist institutions often cannot fund staff travel to conferences"—clearly, both min-

ority and women's groups suffer from lack of resources; 3) implies that the violence against women movement is rabidly anti-male and anti-heterosexual—"denying humanity to half the race because of its gender." In Ellis' words, Dworkin and her "sympathizers"...vision of female life...is the antithesis of the worship of heterosexuality"—which is another way of saying that they worship homosexuality. There is no basis for this claim and why, in any case, is Ellis so concerned with sexual preference when the main issue is violence against women?

Perhaps more outrageous is Diana Johnstone's article on the murder of Helene Legotier by her husband, Louis Althusser (*ITT*, Dec. 10). Johnstone sets the tone of her article by calling Althusser's act "suicide." The real point of this incident is that yet another man has murdered his wife. Johnstone's last few paragraphs ask for sympathy for Althusser's despair. In this shocking story, *ITT* joins the ranks of the male-dominated institutions who have, for centuries, asked us to forgive the "disturbed" men who batter, torture and kill their wives and lovers.

Battering and murder of women in homes is the most prevalent crime internationally. It is time for all people to recognize that excuses are no longer acceptable—even for famous male leftists.

-Betty D. Robinson

Massachusetts Coalition of
Battered Women Service Groups

Diana Johnstone replies: I assume—indeed, I hope—that Betty Robinson's ready rage and indignation are useful attitudes to the work she is doing. Still, I wish she might stretch her sympathy for women to the point of trying to understand why another woman might not perceive things exactly as she does.

I am making such an effort, but I must admit to being baffled at such outrage over my refusal to kick a man when he is down. It would not have occurred to me that feeling sorry for someone who—apparently in a moment of madness—has committed a monstrous act that reduces the rest of his life to remorse could be considered "shocking." I wonder if the difference in sensibility here may not have less to do with man/woman issues than with traditionally harsh puritanical American attitudes toward unpremeditated emotional crimes. Such crimes are much more severely punished (and much more frequent) in the U.S. than in Europe.

I see a significant difference between a woman who is forced to submit to a brutal husband because she is economically dependent or is bound by her children—the situation, I believe, of most

battered wives—and the case of Helene Legotier, an independent professional woman who chose to marry Althusser when she was more than 60 years old. The first situation is a social problem, the second is psychological (although I do not deny subtle links between the two). Helene Legotier had known Althusser for decades and was always free to leave. She was an intellectual who more than held her own verbally. Althusser was not usually violent, or even active. The milieu and the personalities were so out of the ordinary that I fail to see how Betty Robinson can be so sure that "the real point of this incident is that yet another man has murdered his wife." But supposing she is right, what is the point of that point? Cohabitation of two emotionally unstable people is a dangerous situation, especially when one turns out to be stronger than the other. Should marriage be banned? I really don't see what she is driving at.

UNCRITICAL

YOUR STORY ON SAN FRANCISCO SUPERVISOR Harry Britt "Harry Britt is more than the token gay" (*ITT*, Dec. 24, 1980) is uncritical to the point where it deserves comment.

Valentines written on behalf of any public figure, of any party and any persuasion, do little service. In Britt's case, the assertion that he is "openly socialist" comes as a surprise. He hasn't gone out of his way to proclaim those principles to those of us who often cover city affairs.

In August 1979 the *Examiner* published a survey of city administrators by City Hall reporter Maura Dolan, which found that Britt was considered among the least able supervisors. He scored highest points for "punctuality," lowest for "ability to transcend politics." Sample comments included: "Single-issue individual"... "Overly influenced by gay issues"... "The man has utterly no sense of humor"... "Preachy and self-righteous."

-Paul Shinoff

Reporter, San Francisco Examiner

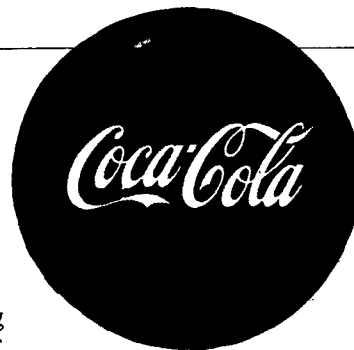
CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

Robert Howard's report on communications workers, "Microshock in the Information Society" (*ITT*, Jan. 21), first appeared in the November/December issue of *Working Papers for a New Society*. A sample copy of that issue is available for \$1 from *Working Papers*, 186 Hampshire St. Cambridge, MA 02139.

NEXT WEEK

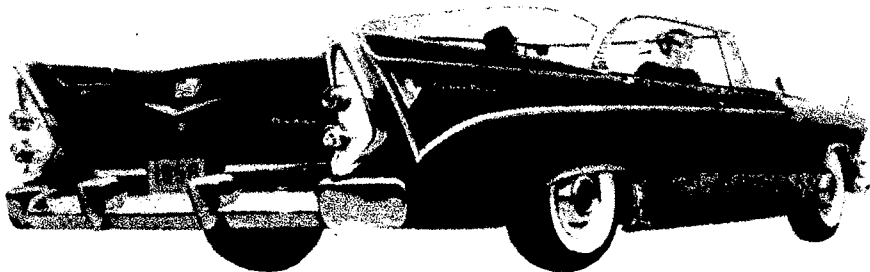
Will things go better for Pepsi?

The Atlanta-based Coca-Cola Corporation has lost its friend in the White House and the other cola has lost no time making its move. J.C. Louis, co-author of *The Cola Wars*, reports on Pepsi's big inaugural bash for Ronald Reagan.



When GM talks, Detroit listens

General Motors says it's doing the city a big favor by building a new Cadillac plant there. So why does it insist on destroying a neighborhood to build a parking lot? And why must the city forgive 63 percent of the new factory's property tax? David Moberg reports.



PERSPECTIVES

Democracy interferes with free enterprise

By James Livingston

THE NOISY GNASHING OF TEETH THAT ACCOMPANIED corporate utterances over the last two years has recently given way to more hopeful sounds from the vicinity of Wall Street. Most journalists take this to mean that Ronald Reagan's election has inspired new confidence in the integrity of the American economy. But influential corporate leaders are not convinced that a celebration is in order yet. Indeed, their latest manifestos share an abiding pessimism about the long-term prospects for private enterprise in the U.S. ¶Felix Rohatyn's sermon about the "coming emergency," published in the *New York Review of Books*, will be the most widely read of the new corporate jeremiads. But there are plenty of others. All of them adopt the tone of Cotton Mather preaching to sinners in the throes of extravagance. More important, all of them connect our fall from grace with "five decades of government policy aimed at income and employment stability," as the Morgan Guaranty Trust puts it.

Rohatyn's bitter lament is easily the most pointed. This is due in part to the fact that his analysis of our situation is based on the kind of apocalyptic economic determinism we normally associate with the sectarian left. Rohatyn argues that in a "padded society" like ours—in a society that for 50 years has promoted income security and thus price rigidity at the expense of balanced government budgets and the work ethic itself—the state and related political processes have become what Herbert Hoover feared they would become: a trough at which a multitude of interest groups feed at public expense. As a result, the "current political structure" is incapable of responding to the nation's critical economic problems, and "this makes a crisis inevitable."

Yet Rohatyn's fears are balanced by his belief that "only a major crisis will force the kind of constitutional change advocated by serious students of government today." The changes he looks for

Felix Rohatyn and other business leaders want to end our system of checks & balances.

are political, but, like most left-wing sectarians, he can't see any way to begin to make those changes without the prior impetus of an "emergency" that somehow illuminates the evils of "current politics." The difference, of course, is that Rohatyn will be in a position to make changes if and when the crisis does come. That is why he advertises an analogy between New York City in 1975 and the nation in 1981.

Henry Kaufman, an influential economist who is a senior partner at Salomon Brothers of New York, is less frantic in his assault on what Rohatyn calls a "padded society." But he is no less candid about, or fearful of, its probable consequences. In his recent address to the Economic Club of Chicago, Kaufman pointed to a "fundamental change [that] has been taking place in our society over the past five decades": the majority of the American people, he contends, is now committed to "democracy oriented toward an unaffordable egalitarian shar-

ing of production rather than [toward] equal opportunity."

This is a primary cause of our recent inflation, according to Kaufman, because the government's transfers of claims on wealth to meet the demands of the new egalitarianism exceed the economy's ability to service those claims in real terms: there are simply more claims on commodities than commodities. That egalitarianism has also contributed to the breakdown of the "discipline required to maintain government policies that will keep to a reasonable economic course," because the majority sees no need to defer more transfers of claims on production in the name of equality. Again, the economic problem becomes a political one; more specifically, the economic problem becomes an excess of equality.

Yet Rohatyn and Kaufman, and their allies in boardrooms across the country, know perfectly well that the state apparatus is an indispensable means to economic and social stabilization in the modern world. They treat Milton Friedman's 20th century version of "laissez-faire" as something that belongs in the classroom and the textbooks, not in the real world of business. The corporate jeremiads do not target state intervention in the economy as such, but attack government policies that support consumption as against capital formation, at policies that support social as against economic objectives—at policies that apparently nurture a new society struggling to be born within the old.

Class struggle from above.

In sum, Rohatyn, Kaufman, *et al.*, see themselves as engaged in a momentous struggle—a class struggle, if you will—for control of the state, and thus for leadership of American society. As Kaufman puts it, "the problem of the disregard for capital and the inherent malaise it breeds rests with all of us. We have, I believe, a last-ditch opportunity to stop the tide and to strike a new balance between social and economic objectives." Surely the problem so conceived is larger than a state apparatus animated by old-style liberalism for behind the welfare state stands a majority committed to an "unaffordable" egalitarianism. "We live, after all, in a democratic political system," Kaufman notes, "and no government leading such a system can long be independent of the will and action of the electorate." This is why Citibank economists have suggested that Ronald Reagan's election has not fundamentally altered the terms of the struggle for control of the state. They remind their clients that "other electoral triumphs in recent memory did little to solve the problems that confront us," and that "Reagan's campaign promised more jobs and rising incomes."

So corporate leaders realize that they must seize the time. The program that flows from their historical analysis is accordingly aggressive. It hinges on policies

that will introduce "greater flexibility" into labor markets by removing the "padding" of government-sponsored income security—in other words, it hinges on policies that will severely limit the sphere of collective bargaining (above and beyond any temporary or emergency wage freeze), restrict the government's ability to maintain aggregate demand and stabilize incomes, and reduce any direct public subsidies to consumption. So much for Lord Keynes.

Yet the new corporate dispensation is something more than a revival of the old-time neo-classical religion, which preaches higher unemployment as the cure for all economic ills, because it presumes the significance of the political and ideological changes wrought by 50 years of Keynesian demand management. Corporate leaders recognize that the key to enacting their program is to insulate the state (the executive branch and its attendant agencies) from the government—from the interest groups and broader social movements educated and enfranchised by the New Deal, the Fair Deal, the New Frontier, the Great Society, and the New Left, and represented, with varying degrees of commitment and success, in the Congress and in state and local governments. Rohatyn, for example, complains that "a government of checks and balances has become all checks and no balances... Today, we could not build our road system, the TVA, or the Manhattan Project. Be-

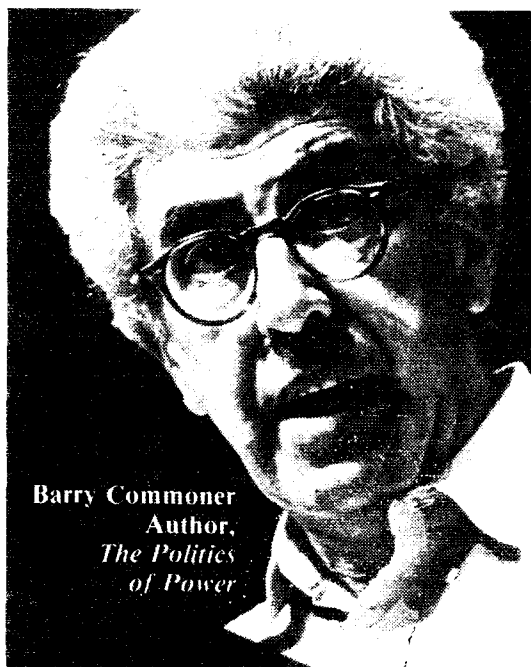
tween the Congress, the courts, the numerous interest groups, these projects would all die on the vine." He wants constitutional change "so that a president with a real vision of the future will be able to put his program through."

The novelty of the recent jeremiads lies, then, not so much in the fact that corporate leaders have become increasingly explicit about their fear of equality, and correspondingly suspicious of the economic functions of government by the people. What is new here is that corporate leaders can now suggest that the reconstruction of the constitutional foundations of political authority is a practical and necessary way to nullify five decades of government policies aimed at employment and income stability. They realize, in short, that existing institutional bases of class rule are no longer sufficient to guarantee the future of private enterprise.

Their predicament is interesting, if only because when a ruling class loses its belief in its capacity to rule, it often seeks to reconstitute its power and authority in ways that destroy the legitimacy of its claims to both, and so creates a genuine ideological crisis. At least that is what happened in England in the early 17th century, in France in the late 18th century, in the U.S. between 1844 and 1860, and elsewhere, of course, in the 20th century.

James Livingston is a Chicago historian.





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IN DEPTH

Hanigan case spotlights Arizona's feudal system

By Lourdes Arguelles and Gary MacEoin

HAVING LOST AN APPEAL FOR DISMISSAL, THOMAS AND Patrick Hanigan are waiting for the federal court in Tucson, Ariz., to set a date for their trial on charges related to attacks on undocumented Mexican workers. A new trial began in Prescott, Ariz., Jan. 20. Judge Bilby granted a change of venue because he said less negative publicity there would benefit the court's impartiality. Many Chicanos, however, feel that the trial was moved because the Chicano population in Prescott is very small. ¶The Hanigan case, which has been

making headlines in Arizona for more than three years, is an important commentary on justice in the Southwest. The Hanigan brothers were first charged with kidnapping, robbing and torturing three Mexican undocumented workers: Eleazar Ruelas Zavala, Manuel Garcia Loya and Bernabe Herrera Mata.

An all-Anglo jury acquitted the Hanigans in 1977 in a state trial. The verdict was denounced by Mexicans, Chicanos and a collection of social reformers who continued protests for two years, until the federal government empaneled a grand jury that indicted the Hanigans on a technical violation of the Hobbs Act in October 1979. They could not, however, be tried a second time on the original charges. All the federal grand jury found was "a robbery affecting interstate commerce." Ruben Sandoval, a Chicano civil rights attorney from San Antonio, was outraged. "The trial will center on the technical elements of the case—the fact that a few dollars and clothes were taken from the victims," he said. "The inhuman treatment—the shooting and the burning—will be forgotten. The jury might be convinced that the simple robbery of a few dollars from a few wetbacks was not such a big deal."

After a protracted trial on these charges, the jury reported that it was hopelessly deadlocked, so a third trial will have to be held.

Press accounts of the case and the fledgling Washington-based National Coalition for Justice on the Hanigan Case have created interest in social conditions in the Southwest. In Arizona the Hanigan family's prominence has given the case drama by "pitting the rich gringo against the illegal aliens," as one journalist put it.

Background.

Anglo domination of Arizona dates back less than 150 years, to 1848, when the U.S. annexed more than half the territory of Mexico. Anglos quickly began to design Arizona's capitalist development to create a "white buffer state" between Hispanics in New Mexico and Mexican Sonora. At the time, this region was little more than a desert, but Anglos quickly mobilized banking capital and federal monies for large scale irrigation, railroad building and mining projects. Federal projects in Arizona remain at a level far above its population share. Joint Economic Committee of Congress reports show that more than \$100 billion in direct subsidies has been allocated Arizona's special economic interests.

The need for a flexible and cheap labor pool early became evident. In his book, *U.S.-Mexico Border: A Politico-Economic Profile*, Raul Fernandez notes that "for American agri-business north of the border, the Mexican migrant was better than any previous migrant. The ideal immigrant was one who showed up for harvest work and who disappeared in the off-season." The supply of this kind of labor seemed unlimited—the thousands of colonized Mexicans were gradually joined by millions of migrants

heading north.

In the past two decades Arizona has become a preferred relocation site for industry in the U.S. Among the newer arrivals are high technology industries, light and heavy manufacturing firms, as well as branch offices of multinationals.

The relatively cheap and unorganized Chicano work force remains essential. Further, the cyclical importation, deportation and re-importation of Mexican labor is key for agribusiness and competitive sectors in the economy. If the Chicano work force is cheap in conventional economic terms, Mexican labor is doubly cheap because it is acquired at little or no social cost. The cost of these people's upbringing and education will be paid by Mexico.

But the development of industry, as opposed to agriculture, has also created a demand for a skilled, urban, young and preferably Anglo labor force. Many new migrants come from the industrial and financial centers of the North, settling primarily in the metropolitan areas of Phoenix and Tucson. Their lifestyles contrast sharply with the poverty of the indigenous Chicano and Native American populations; the contrast is even more striking with Mexican workers.

The voice of the state's small business and big agricultural capital continues to be heard in Congress. Representatives like Barry Goldwater, whose brother Bob's Arrowhead Ranch is a large employer of undocumented labor, and Senator Dennis De Concini, scion of a cowboy family, are effective in making federal immigration policies suit their economic interests.

One such interest is the maintenance of the infamous Texas Proviso appended to the immigration law of 1965, which makes it "a felony to conceal, harbor or shield from detection an undocumented alien," but provides that "the employ-

ment of undocumented persons, including the practices incidental to it, are not deemed to constitute harboring." This statute exempts employers from legal responsibility for immigrant labor.

In the media and the schools the undocumented have become the preferred scapegoats for the byproducts of cowboy capitalism—unemployment, health hazards, stress, crime—and for the state's inability to cope with these problems. Arizona remains the only state without Medicaid. The sentiment against the undocumented was expressed by Leonard Chapman, Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) director during the Nixon administration: "The United States is being overrun by illegal aliens. They are occupying jobs that are needed by unemployed citizens. They are not paying taxes."

Immigrants to Arizona come from many parts of Mexico, most notably the states of Guerrero, Chihuahua, Durango and Sonora, where, as peasants on small family holdings, they grew corn, beans and other subsistence crops. For many decades, but now with increasing rapidity, they have been pushed from their tiny plots by the concentration of land in fewer hands and the diversion of whole regions from subsistence-crop to export commodity production.

The mechanics of border crossing are arduous and complex. The Border Patrol accommodates the needs of agribusiness along the border; patrol raids are timed to avoid harvest seasons and other periods of peak labor demand when they could seriously hurt local interests. While an estimated 65 percent do make it across, thousands of Mexican workers lose their lives and meager property, or are assaulted, maimed, jailed or raped in the border region. Once in the Southwest the Mexicans frequently work for Chicanos who act as intermediaries for Anglo employers. Pay ranges from \$3 to

When all else fails, *el loco* (the crazy one) is sent back home.

For most women, domestic labor is the point of first entry into the U.S. labor force. Working hours are frequently from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., pay is usually \$200 a month plus bed and board; and the worker is allowed out on weekends only. Day domestics are usually paid \$2 per hour, with few or no additional benefits. Mexican domestics are in high demand by a middle class who want to maintain a home often beyond their means or who want to add a "Spanish" flavor to their lifestyle.

Undaunted by the systematic and often ferocious campaign of the cowboy capitalist against undocumented labor, Chicano working-class organizations have become centers of radical political activity on the issue. The Coalition of Justice and the Concilio Manzo have both addressed the plight of the undocumented. Their members march the streets of the major cities in the state, condemning the Anglo capitalist establishment for the exploitation of Mexican labor. Study groups and pressure lobbies flourish among minority students, workers and some progressive Anglos. Three years ago, Mexicans successfully organized collective bargaining units in the El Mirage agricultural zone near Phoenix in the face of harassments and threats from the INS, bosses and the Anglo population.

A culture of Third Worldism—with its contradictions and potentials—is emerging in Arizona. The futility of the Anglo establishment's attempt to maintain the social order is increasingly evident. For many, the crucial battle is now with the federal bureaucracy that slowly raises the number and level of social services.

The media's silence on social issues and justice is ending, and that is important. And the reporting of horror stories similar to the Hanigan case has emerged.

Charges of kidnapping and torture "pit the rich gringo against the illegal aliens," as third trial looms.

\$4 an hour, suggesting that more than cheap labor, Mexicans are now simple instruments to keep the wage level down. The monetary reward aspect of this situation does not reflect, however, the true nature of the exploitive working conditions for these workers: no fringe benefits, no holiday pay, 12-hour work days and job insecurity.

For most undocumented workers, private life is lonely and depressed. Resulting from fear of involuntary return, imprisonment or physical hardships, siege mentality and its attendant psychological byproducts become inevitable characteristics of Mexicans. In the absence of both mental health and other health services, Mexicans cope effectively with psychotic breakdowns through a stunning combination of prayer, punishment, herbal remedies and *sabadas* (massage).

In October two Texans made headlines on charges of peonage for holding 14 undocumented aliens, 10 Mexicans and four Salvadorans, against their will. And an Arizona rancher was arrested for chaining an undocumented Mexican to a tree for 24 hours. Ironically, the rancher is free without bond; the Mexican is jailed as a material witness. Cowboy justice still has some wrinkles to straighten out. ■

Lourdes Arguelles is a political economist, psychologist and writer who has lived and worked in the Southwest. Gary MacEoin, lawyer and political scientist, has written numerous books and articles on Latin American countries and peoples.

Border Patrol agents arresting illegal Mexican immigrants in southern California.



INPRINT

FICTION

Woman leaves parlor for feminist politics

The Convert
By Elizabeth Robins
The Women's Press, \$5.95

By Margaret George

This is a reprinted turn-of-the-century British "suffragette" novel by a little-known writer who was herself converted to the cause and to the tactics of confrontation of the Sylvia and Emmeline Pankhurst-led feminist movement. Indeed, as the jacket-description puts it, the novel "blurs the borders between history and fiction."

Most of the characters in *The Convert* are upper and upper-middle class British, whom we see in a constant social whirl: calling upon one another, dining with one another, "weekending" with one another. They are London society matrons, lords of estates and of investments, politicians both Liberal and Tory. It is hard to keep them straight—or for that matter to care much about many of them.

In any case, at center-attention is Vida Levering, lovely, rich, "young" (she is in her early '30s), a woman welcomed with

cries of delight at the parties of the London social set. It is made evident from the start that Vida Levering's attractiveness includes a kind of mystery: she has spent most of the past ten years abroad in Italy (lucky leisured lady!); she is cultured, intelligent, and *unmarried*, apparently by choice.

We follow Vida Levering through various occasions at ruling class houses of London and environs. One conversational bit reoccurs amidst the sophisticated banalities: Vida's friends are disturbed and disgusted by the suffragettes' aggressive activities in the city. Gentlemen and ladies alike, they declare their outrage with these monstrous, unnatural females who struggle with police, invade the House of Commons, "demand" the vote ("what cheek!") and expose themselves to rowdy elements in mass meetings held in city squares.

Vida at first joins the chorus, though with reserve. Clearly there is something thoughtful and sensitive that separates her from her peers of the socially elite (though other women share it in part: Mrs. Freddy, a viva-

cious party-giver and goer, admits—when Mr. Freddy is absent—to "moderate" feminism; and Sophia, daughter of a lord, is heard in carelessly aristocratic support of votes for women).

Attraction.

Obviously, Vida must see for herself the suffragette meetings in Hyde Park and Trafalgar Square. She prepares to reject the scene, to find distasteful and revolting this spectacle of women on soap-boxes, haranguing mobs of raucous workingmen, making a circus out of issues which should be left to the educated debaters of salons and parliaments. But of course she is hooked—thrilled and fascinated, drawn especially by the stubborn courage, penetrating intelligence and quick wit of the chief of the feminist speakers, Ernestine Blunt (who is a fictional amalgam of the Pankhursts). Vida commits herself, beside working women on Hyde Park platforms, to the crusade for female political equality with men.

In its late-Victorian/Edwardian style and mannerisms, *The Convert* is contrived, sometimes silly—the final revelation of Vi-



Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst in prison garb.

da's mystery is almost comically anti-climactic. Its best moments are the Hyde Park scenes, in which the dialogue, the crowd heckling and male mockery of the feminists ring true: Robins insisted that her readers face squarely the brutality of males, of all classes, toward women who would not be silenced or intimidated.

The feminist message of *The Convert* ends on an uncertain

note. Vida will speak with and for all kinds of women, but she manipulates men of her own class to champion the female cause. But that too rings true: the leaders of the suffragette movement—with a few outcast exceptions—could not yet get beyond a middle-class maternalism.

Margaret George is a professor of European history at Northern Illinois University.

NOTEBOOK

Guide to Marxist Literary Criticism

Compiled by Chris Bullock and David Peck
Indiana University Press,
176 pp., \$12.95

Peck and Bullock have produced a remarkably thorough and well-organized bibliography of Marxist criticism, one that no library and few students of literature will want to be without. Drawing on a variety of British, Canadian, U.S. and German periodicals and copious hints from friends, the authors add pithy and objective annotation. Most useful are the sections that list critical articles on individual authors, who are grouped according to nationality and period. It is perhaps carping to wish that Bullock and Peck, who are themselves bright literary scholars, had contributed an introductory essay on the state of the art of Marxist criticism.

DRR



Stewart Brand

ly on its predecessors, especially in its sections on energy conservation, home repairs and politics. This last section is a particularly pleasant surprise that reflects Brand's perception that the now-aging children of a decade ago are still searching for political solutions to human problems and are perhaps better situated now to press that search.

DRR

Prayers for Dark People

By W.E.B. DuBois
Edited by Herbert Aptheker
University of Massachusetts Press, 96 pp., \$10 (cloth)
\$4.50 (paper)

Slim but not slight, this handsome book collects prayers, aphorisms and homilies written on scraps of paper by DuBois in 1909 and 1910 and never before published. Intended for the children and young adults whom DuBois encountered in and around Atlanta University, the prayers are

frankly didactic, teaching virtues from faith to temperance to thrift. They also extend the realm of Christian duty to include working for peace, racial justice and equal rights for women. Taken together, these fugitive pieces illuminate the deep spiritual values that undergirded DuBois' political practice throughout his life. They also remind us of the breadth of DuBois' vision and, even in his private musings, of the elegance of his writing. A small excerpt suffices to make the point: "So tonight in Persia and China, in Russia and Turkey, in Africa and all America, let us bow with our brothers and sisters and pray as they pray for a world, well-governed—void of war and caste, and free to each asking soul. Amen."

DRR

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From the Grassroots: Social and Political Essays Towards Afro-American Liberation

By Manning Marable
South End Press, 250 pp., \$5.50
This volume brings together essays written by Marable, a historian, journalist and activist in the National Black Political Assembly, during the 1970s. Most

of the material represents a skillful reworking of articles originally appearing in his newspaper columns in *Amsterdam News* and *In These Times*. After a weighty introduction criticizing liberal and reactionary strategies for black liberation and discussing the folly of revolutionary posturing, Marable develops his own position in four sections. The first two groups of essays address politics and culture respectively while the latter two treat problems defined by Marable as the "Southern Question" and "The State, Race and Society."

In fact the barriers between the sections are elusive as Marable manages to write about power without losing sight of cultural issues and vice-versa. Such a comparison must be humbling to any contemporary writer, but in his understanding of the complexities of nationalism and of the importance of culture, Marable is very much in the tradition of W.E.B. DuBois. Essays on Martin Luther King and A. Philip Randolph are among the book's highlights.

DRR

Contributors: Pat Aufderheide and David Roediger.

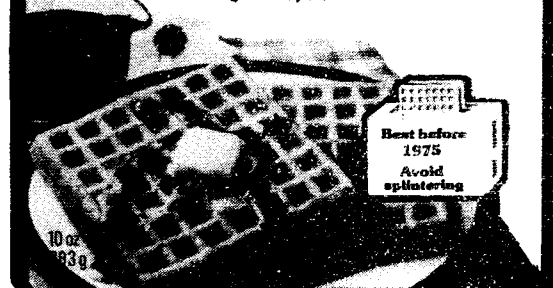
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THEATER

Shepard goes against the code

By Joel Schechter

Writing about himself ten years ago, Sam Shepard said, "I don't want to be a playwright. I want to be a rock and roll star." Since then he has won a Pulitzer Prize for playwriting in 1979, and he has become a star not of rock and roll but of films—*Days of Heaven*, *Resurrection* and the forthcoming *Raggedy Man*. In 1980 he was chosen as one of *People* magazine's top 25 personalities, a dubious distinction accorded few other artists and no other playwrights. In short, he has become a media celebrity as well as an accomplished writer. At the age of 37, Shepard is closer than any other American to the "leading playwright" status previously given to Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller and Edward Albee.

Shepard has not actively sought this acclaim or the media image of film star who writes plays. He generally avoids the press, and prefers seclusion on his ranch in California when not in a film studio. His plays premiere at the Magic Theatre, a small experimental stage in San Francisco, rather than on Broadway. In fact, he has never had a production on Broadway, unlike most other prominent American playwrights. His works are frequently staged at non-profit regional theaters around the country; the plays can hardly be regarded as lucrative properties, the way that Neil Simon's comedies are.

Born in 1943 on an army base near Chicago, Shepard spent some of his youth on an avocado ranch in Southern California. (The ranch, and the broken family life that went with it, appear in Shepard's semi-autobiographical play, *The Curse of the Starving Class*). At the age of 20, he toured the U.S. as an actor in a small theater group, and ended the tour by moving to New York's Lower East Side. There he wrote plays for Off-Broadway's experimental groups, won a few prizes, and found himself commissioned to write for some of the country's leading regional theaters.

Shepard's avocation as a rock drummer, his friendships with Patti Smith and Bob Dylan, and his past fondness for hallucinogenic drugs might lead one to regard him as a product of or even a spokesperson for the counter-culture of the '60s. But he has never embraced the New Left politics of the '60s. His play

dealing most directly with events of that decade, *Operation Side-winder*, ridicules the rhetoric of black revolutionaries and their white sympathizers, as well as the jargon of Air Force generals and scientists. The play's thin, unimaginative caricatures of hippies, generals and Black revolutionaries reveal more about Shepard than they do about the culture he mocked. Satire is not his forte. Political satire is a genre he ought to avoid, and usually he does.

His best plays, *The Tooth of Crime*, *Geography of a Horse-dreamer*, *Action* and *La Turista*, are replete with surreal fantasy and poetry that function as critiques of, and stage metaphors for America's consumer culture. *The Tooth of Crime* portrays a futuristic society where rock stars use songs as psychic weapons to destroy their rivals. Hoss, a successful rocker challenged by a young punk named Crow, admits: "I'm too old fashioned. That's it. Gotta kick out the scruples. Go against the code. That's what they used to do. The big ones. Dylan, Jagger, Townsend. All them cats broke codes." At the start of their duel, the two combatants "choose an argot. Singles or LP's, 45, 78, 33 1/3." Shepard gives the two singers a fierce poetic language derived from rock and blues patters; their talking blues incorporate diverse styles of American music, and Crow's verbal conquest of Hoss suggests how quickly and brutally new art consigns its antecedents to obsolescence in our disposable culture.

The colorful, cartoon-like language in Shepard's best plays, indebted to blues, jazz, rock, native American rituals and R. Crumb's Zap Comix, have distinguished his style from the introspective, psychological realism that prevailed in mainstream American playwriting (Odets, Williams, Inge, Miller, some of Albee) for decades. Shepard's characters frequently deliver long, lyrical monologues comparable to jazz riffs, and their word arias constitute hallucinatory dreams, incantations in which speech becomes a source of freedom from the oppressive conditions around them. In *Buried Child*, which won for Shepard a Pulitzer Prize, one of these long comic monologues is spoken by Halie, a mother lamenting the death of her son Ansel. In a speech full of bigoted fantasy and self-deception, which allows Halie to escape the dreariness of

everyday life, she claims Ansel would "still be alive today if he hadn't married into the Catholics. The Mob. Catholic women are the Devil Incarnate. He wouldn't listen. He was blind with love. Blind. I knew. Everyone knew. The wedding was more like a funeral. You remember? All those Italians. All that horrible black, greasy hair. The smell of cheap cologne. I think even the priest was wearing a pistol. When he gave her the ring I knew he was a dead man."

Fantasies like this have become less prominent in Shepard's recent plays. The style is closer to psychological realism in *True West*, his newest work, and for this reason the play is less original, if more accessible than his earlier writings. Along with *Buried Child* and *The Curse of the Starving Class*, *True West* concerns the disintegration of a nuclear family. Some critics hint it is Shepard's own family history about which he is writing, and attribute to this influence the more realistic form of his scripts.

In *True West*, two brothers, Lee and Austin, unconsciously exchange personalities. Austin, a Hollywood screenwriter, finds his role usurped when Lee sells the studio a hackneyed script, his first effort, while Austin cannot sell his own writing. Austin in turn adopts his brother's lifestyle as a petty thief and drifter. The play ends with the brothers wrestling in their mother's kitchen. She watches as they try to kill one another—two seemingly inseparable but irreconcilable halves of some large force that may be the spirit of the "true" and vanishing American West: half Hollywood, half desert, with an immense amount of parking lots, highway and human rivalry in between.

Despite the prosaic language and predictable, schematic plot of *True West*, the play reiterates a continuing Shepard theme. His concern with what could be called "transformation" has been evident since the 1960s, when Shepard wrote scenes for the Open Theatre, an experimental

workshop directed by Joseph Chaikin in New York. The Open Theatre's "transformation" exercises inspired such plays as *The Serpent*, in which actors collectively impersonated the tree and serpent in Eden, then turned themselves into John Kennedy and the limousine he rode through Dallas.

The play visually connected the Biblical origins of death to the assassination of JFK, and asked how murder had become so large a part of American consciousness. Instead of portraying single characters, actors were almost interchangeably part of a collective consciousness on stage. The influence of these experiments appears in Shepard's work when characters replace one another and seem to share the same consciousness, as in *True West*.

Sometimes the collective consciousness in which they find their identity is crassly, absurdly commercial, as in Shepard's *La Turista*, where an American tourist named Kent reveals the origin of his name and his companion, Salem's. A visitor from a tobacco factory once told Kent's father, "If you change each one of the stupid names you gave your eight kids, from whatever it is now to one of the eight brand names of our cigarettes, I'll set you up in your own little business and give you all the smokes you need." In lines such as these, Shepard humorously suggests the transforming cultural power of popular mythologies that originate in advertising, the nuclear family, the star system. He parodies and derides the influence of these mythologies, whose priests are hucksters and media men: the Hollywood producers, Madison Avenue advertisers, real estate developers, and disc jockies who populate his plays. The myths perpetrated by these figures can turn nature (worthless real estate in *The Curse of the Starving Class*) or art into a bestselling commodity overnight, as quickly as the penniless vagabond Lee in *True West* is transformed into a wealthy screenwriter.

Shepard's own career may suf-
Continued on facing page

CALENDAR

Use the calendar to announce conferences, lectures, films, events, etc. The cost is \$20.00 for two insertions and \$10.00 for each additional insert, for copy of 40 words or less (additional words are 35¢ each). Payment must accompany your announcement, and should be sent to the attention of Bill Rehm.

NEW YORK, N.Y.

January 30

"Homage to Tom McGrath," a Radical History Forum with British historian E.P. Thompson, will take place at John Jay College, 445 W. 59th St., at 7:30 p.m. Admission is \$2.50.

February 1

Eyewitness Report on Polish Workers' Movement. Joel Geier of the International Socialists will speak on his recent trip to Poland. At the NY Marxist School, 151 W. 19th St., 7th fl., 7 p.m. Sponsors: International Socialists and Solidarity: A Socialist-Feminist Network. Donation: \$2.

February 6

"Tighten Your Belts, Bite the Bullet," a 48-minute film that presents the policies and personalities governing New York, and shows the impact of these policies on New York neighborhoods, will premier at 7:30 p.m. at Godoff Auditorium of District 1199 Headquarters, 310 W. 43rd St. A discussion will fol-

low with Dr. Jonathan House, Adam Veneski and others intimately involved with New York's fiscal crisis. Tickets are \$4.00 in advance and \$5.00 at the door. For more information, call: Jim Gaffney at 620-0877 or Jonathan Miller at 674-3375.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

January 30

"Eyewitness Report on Poland," with Joel Geier, International Socialist, reporting on his recent trip to Poland and his discussions with Solidarity and KOR. 7:30 p.m. at Auditorium Building C, 2201 G Street, N.W. Sponsored by Washington DSOC, Marho, I.S. and Washington Area Socialist-Feminist Organization.

February 8-10

"Empowerment and Equity for Rural People," the 5th National Conference on Rural America, will bring together rural grassroots people around the nation to launch a major new rural action agenda. Registration: \$25.00 for members; \$50.00 for non-members. Contact: Joyce G. Hom, Rural America, 1346 Connecticut Ave., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036. (202) 659-2800.

LOS ANGELES, CA

February 1

"New Directions in the Jewish Community"—report and panel discussion of recent conferences: New Agenda in Washington, D.C., and Conference of Sec-

ular Jewish Organizations in L.A. Sponsored by the New American Movement, 2936 W. 8th Street. 8 p.m. Donation \$2.00.

PITTSBURGH, PA

January 30-February 1

"Building a Strategy for Survival" will be the theme for Mobilization for Survival's 4th Annual National Conference. There will be workshops, speakers, free housing and childcare. Contact: MFS, 3601 Locust Walk, Philadelphia, PA 19104. (215) 386-4875 for more information.

CHICAGO, IL

February 1

"How German Workers Are Fighting the Crisis," a forum by Trade Union Action League representative returned from Germany. At Holiday Inn, 1 S. Halsted, at 2 p.m. Admission is \$2.00. For more information call: 721-1429. Speakers available for interested groups.

February 4

"The Crisis in Central America." Michael Rivas, Vice-chair of DSOC and Chair of DSOC Hispanic Commission, will speak at St. Paul's Church, 655 W. Fullerton, Wednesday at 7:45 p.m. Auspices of Local Chicago DSOC.

February 16

There will be a wine and cheese reception with Harry C. Boyte, author of "The Backyard Revolution," at Midwest Academy, 600 W. Fullerton, Ave., from 5-8 p.m. Admission is \$1.50.

Shepard

Continued from facing page
fer from this consumer culture mythology now that he is a film star and media celebrity. He could see the dangers coming, perhaps, when he portrayed art-

istic characters vulnerable to corruption by fame and wealth in plays written years before his own celebrityhood. The rock singers in *The Tooth of Crime*, the tribal shaman in *Operation Sidewinder*, the man who dreams winning racehorse names in *Geography of a Horse Dreamer* are celebrated by Shepard not because they reveal a particularly

urgent message through their art, rather because their artistic gifts exist at all under coercive circumstances.

If Shepard himself is not yet a victim of the star syndrome, his newest play, *True West*, may be. The New York production of the play was disowned by the author and his director, Robert Woodruff. They claim that producer

Joseph Papp insisted on casting film stars Peter Boyle and Tommy Lee Jones as the play's two brothers, against the wishes of the director and the playwright. The result of this controversy is that neither acting nor directing are wholly satisfactory in the production.

Perhaps the dangers of stardom are best described by Shep-

IN THESE TIMES JAN. 28-FEB. 3, 1981 15

ard in *Geography of a Horse-dreamer*, when one of the gangsters who has kidnapped the horsedreamer to cash in on his prophecy of races, tells his prisoner: "You got the genius, somebody else got the power. That's how it always is, Beethoven."

Joel Schechter teaches at the Yale School of Drama.

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"N O," ANSWERS Germaine Greer, "I'm not an artist—no more than any other woman. I'm a cook and a gardener, if you really want to know. I only write because I enjoy doing so. My writing serves no other function. Other people think it has some social effect. I don't."

In her latest book, *The Obstacle Race*, the feminist author of *The Female Eunuch* deals with the denials and hurdles that have historically hindered women painters, "but that doesn't mean the women were hampered in being creators," she maintains. "I was only talking about painters. Painters are not creators."

"Painting's a very crazy thing to do. Who said that applying color to a two-dimensional surface was equal to converting the heathen or discovering the source of the White Nile?"

Nor, it seems, is it especially important or natural for women to write, either. What is important, Greer claims, is that women talk.

"Women are characteristically the verbal sex," she says. "Women teach children to speak, men don't. Language is our invention."

"The interesting question," she says, "is why women would ever want to write anyway. Especially poetry, which is just gobblets of language surrounded by a sea of white paper."

"I don't write poetry, except in letters, which is typical of many women writers. Women of the 18th century did that all the time. But then, poetry was an extension of daily life, not inimical to it."

Although Germaine Greer denies being an artist and claims she writes only for fun, her writings have nevertheless had a profound impact upon the women's movement and women still seek her out as a leader. Perhaps for this reason she takes her social responsibilities seriously and reveals a passionate commitment to other women, especially, she claims, Third World women.

"I'm more interested in Third World women than American women," she says. "One of the toughest jobs I have is trying to explain to American women why their attitudes are insulting to Third World women and how they oppress Third World women."

"I saw Betty Friedan stand up and talk about TV dinners and being hemmed in the kitchen to women who didn't have kitchens or TVs or frozen dinners. Most women in the world would love to have a kitchen, they don't quite know what it is."

But, even if American women did care about their distant sisters, Greer says she hasn't the faintest idea how to convey that concern.

"I've tried in every way. I thought International Women's Year would be it. I thought, at last, at last! They're going to stand up and say, 'You bastards, you've done this and this and this and we're sick of it.'"

"Instead, all these professional, beautifully coiffed African women with a million tiny pleats and big earrings stood up and said, 'A woman's life in Uganda is not heaven on earth. *The same is true for men.*' And I said, 'Arrrgh!'"

Greer's surprise and frustration at not finding ordinary women participating in international congresses convinced her that "the only way we can communicate with the women on the other side of the water is by assailing the same things in our own country on our own behalf. Our discontent and anger must echo through to them."

What Germaine Greer is most interested in assailing now is "the politics of human fertility," the title of her next book, which is due "whenever I've written it. McGraw-Hill thinks they'll have it in the spring." (She has also written a screenplay that will appear along with eight stories by other women in *Love*, a film produced and directed by women.)

Human fertility is, as for most women, a sensitive issue with Greer. Particularly so since she was raised as a Catholic and educated by nuns. Perhaps this is

Germaine Greer

LOVE &



DEATH

An Interview

The feminist writer talks about women and motherhood.

By Eric Leif Davin

why she is still attracted to Catholicism, although she doesn't believe in God.

"If you're going to have a religion," she says, "you may as well have one that has an intellectual tradition, one that is rigorous and respectable. It must be right to believe that God, if He exists, is susceptible to rational analysis and isn't a strange warm feeling you experience while hanging out the clothes."

"Besides, I'm not interested in a religion that tries to make life painless, because life will not be painless, not now or ever. We are programmed for pain. We are also programmed for struggle, for intellectual effort."

One of the things Greer is personally struggling with is the Fifth Commandment, which instructs, "Thou shalt not kill!"

"Now," states Greer, "it does not say, 'Thou shalt kill only unbelievers, Vietnamese, oxen, ants, cockroaches or bacteria.' It says, 'Thou shalt not kill.'"

"As such, it's not very useful. You think to yourself, 'I've got to kill, Lord. If I don't kill, I will die myself!' Human life is full of killing. We're slashing and slaying in all directions, all the time. All any human can say is, 'Well, Lord, I did my best not to kill today and I think I've only destroyed about 75 different things.'"

"Obviously, we are supposed to interpret the Commandment."

Greer cites a recent study in England to substantiate her assertion that death—abortion—is a natural part of human fertility. According to Greer's account, the "gonadotropic hormone levels" in the bloodstream of sexually active women using no contraception were measured in order to determine whether undetected conceptions occurred before menstruation.

They found, Greer claims, that 43 percent of the women whose hormone levels revealed they were pregnant menstruated normally and were not pregnant after menstruation. In other words, they experienced spontaneous abortions.

"Now," says Greer, "if Saint Thomas Aquinas is right and the soul comes into existence at the moment of conception, we have a human soul looking for the next step to life on earth. If the blastocyst has a soul, we better start worrying about that blastocyst, because in the natural order of things implantation very often doesn't occur and the blastocyst is lost."

Is this normal cycle of conception and spontaneous abortion so very different, Greer asks, from what we may do intentionally?

"Every society known to anthropologists has practiced either abortion or infanticide or both. Every known society has tried to practice contraception. We all take measures to be sterile at will."

Human sexuality is a high risk area, Greer maintains, a minefield through which women have to find their way while respecting the Fifth Commandment.

"Any woman," she says, "as a woman, has behind her a long history of killing. Women have always killed so that others may live. We are told we are the birth-givers, the nurturers. We are told that it's all pink and blue and baby bows. But, we know that the color of Motherhood is red. We know that babies don't slide out already talcum powdered and dressed in their christening robes. And we know that for many a birth, there is an abortion."

"The lives of women are drenched in death. Motherhood is mourning. Historically, women have seen more dead babies than live ones. We are among the first generation to see live babies and none others."

"But, still, we know that Motherhood is not only giving life, Motherhood is giving death, and always has been."

It is an intimidating message. Like a champion of the Grim Reaper, Germaine Greer proclaims that death is a necessary part of human fertility.

So, I ask: "Do you feel you are an intimidating woman?"

"Well," laughs Greer, "I haven't intimidated you and, God damn it, I've tried!"

Eric Leif Davin impersonates Wolfman Jack on a weekly Pittsburgh radio show.